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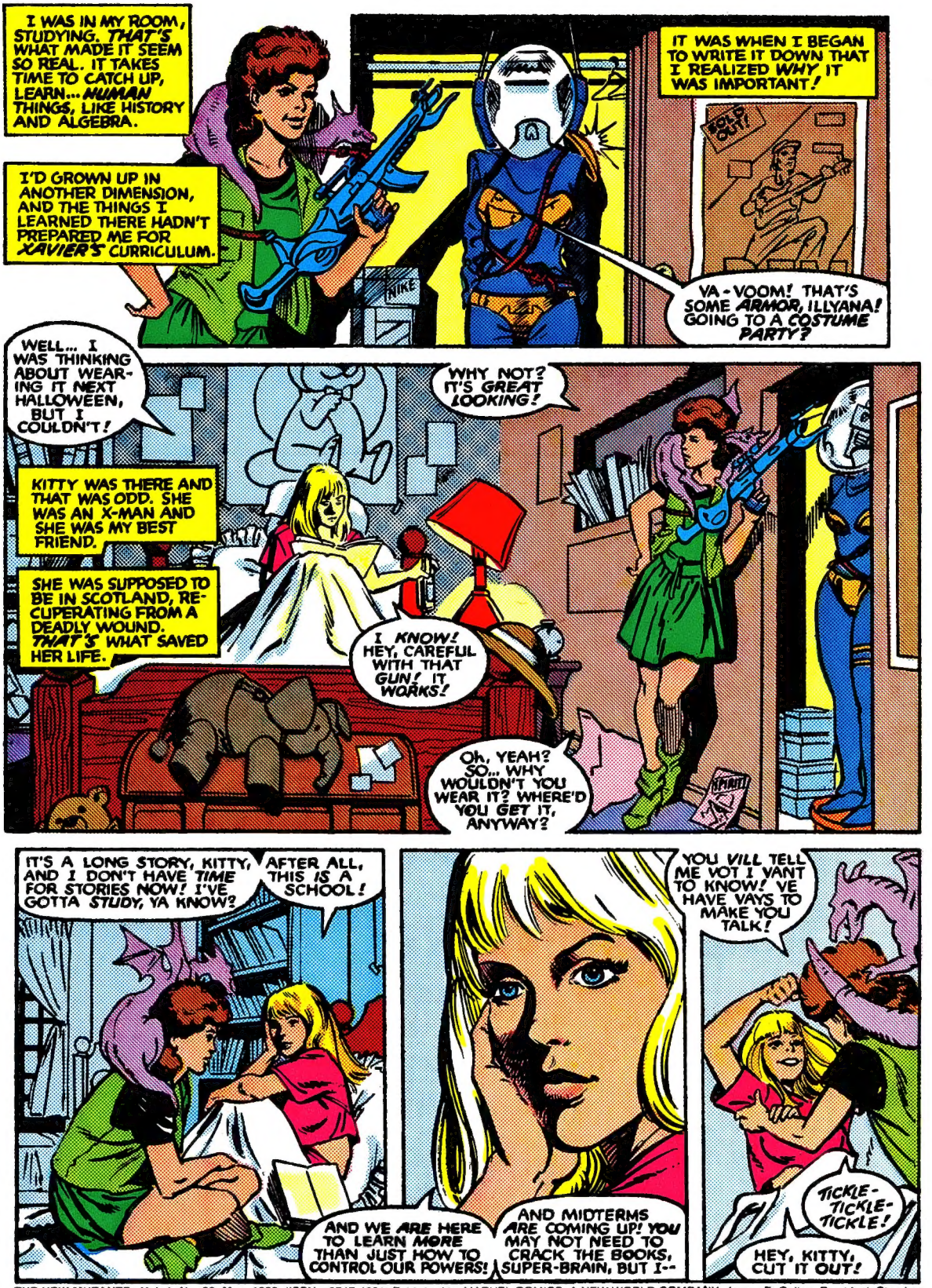
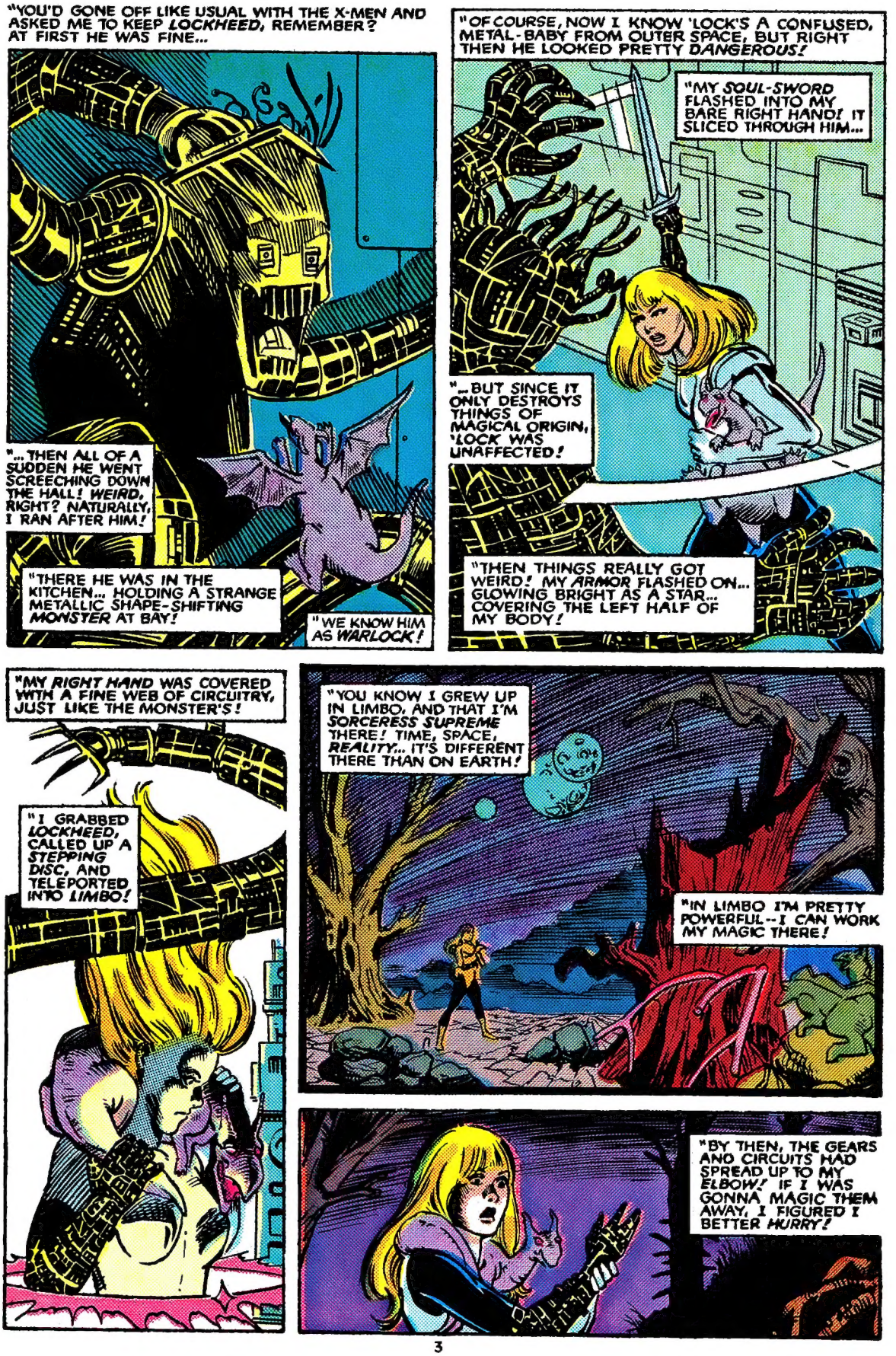
THE NEW MUTANTS®

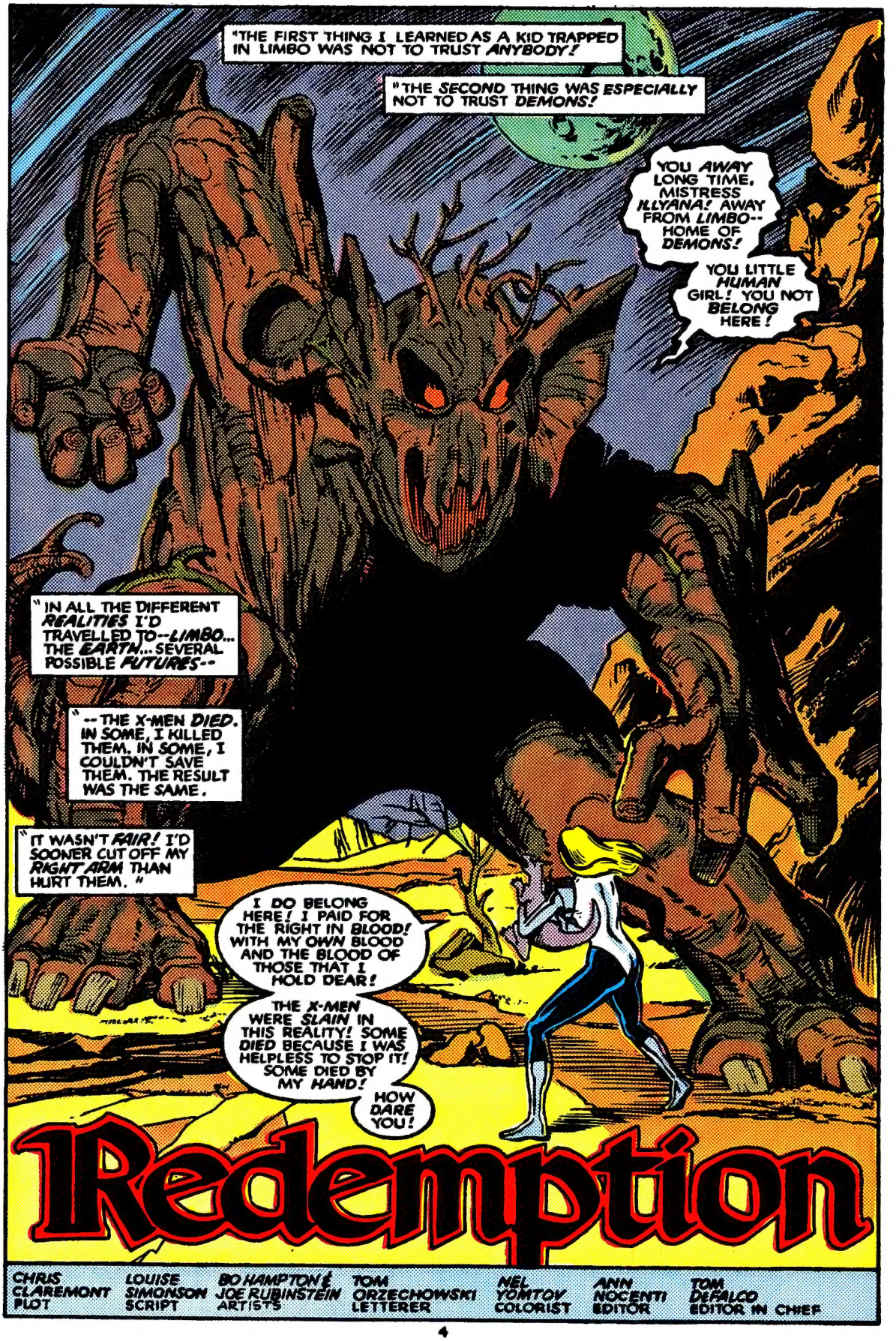

I WAS IN MY ROOM, STUDYING. THAT'S WHAT MADE IT SEEM SO REAL. IT TAKES TIME TO CATCH UP, LEARN... HUMAN THINGS, LIKE HISTORY AND ALGEBRA.
I'D GROWN UP IN ANOTHER DIMENSION, AND THE THINGS I LEARNED THERE HADN'T PREPARED ME FOR XAVIER'S CURRICULUM.
IT WAS WHEN I BEGAN TO WRITE IT DOWN THAT I REALIZED WHY IT WAS IMPORTANT!
SOLD OUT!
YA-VOOM! THAT'S SOME ARMOR, ILLYANA! GOING TO A COSTUME PARTY?
WELL... I WAS THINKING ABOUT WEARING IT NEXT HALLOWEEN, BUT I COULDN'T!
KITTY WAS THERE AND THAT WAS ODD. SHE WAS AN X-MAN AND SHE WAS MY BEST FRIEND.
SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE IN SCOTLAND, RECUPERATING FROM A DEADLY WOUND. THAT'S WHAT SAVED HER LIFE.
WHY NOT? IT'S GREAT LOOKING!
I KNOW! HEY, CAREFUL WITH THAT GUN! IT WORKS!
OH, YEAH? SO... WHY WOULDN'T YOU WEAR IT? WHERE'D YOU GET IT, ANYWAY?
IT'S A LONG STORY, KITTY, AND I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR STORIES NOW! I'VE GOTTA STUDY, YA KNOW?
AFTER ALL, THIS IS A SCHOOL!
AND WE ARE HERE TO LEARN MORE THAN JUST HOW TO CONTROL OUR POWERS!
AND MIDTERMS ARE COMING UP! YOU MAY NOT NEED TO CRACK THE BOOKS, SUPER-BRAIN, BUT I--
YOU VILL TELL ME VOT I VANT TO KNOW! VE HAVE VAYS TO MAKE YOU TALK!
TICKLE-TICKLE-TICKLE!
HEY, KITTY, CUT IT OUT!

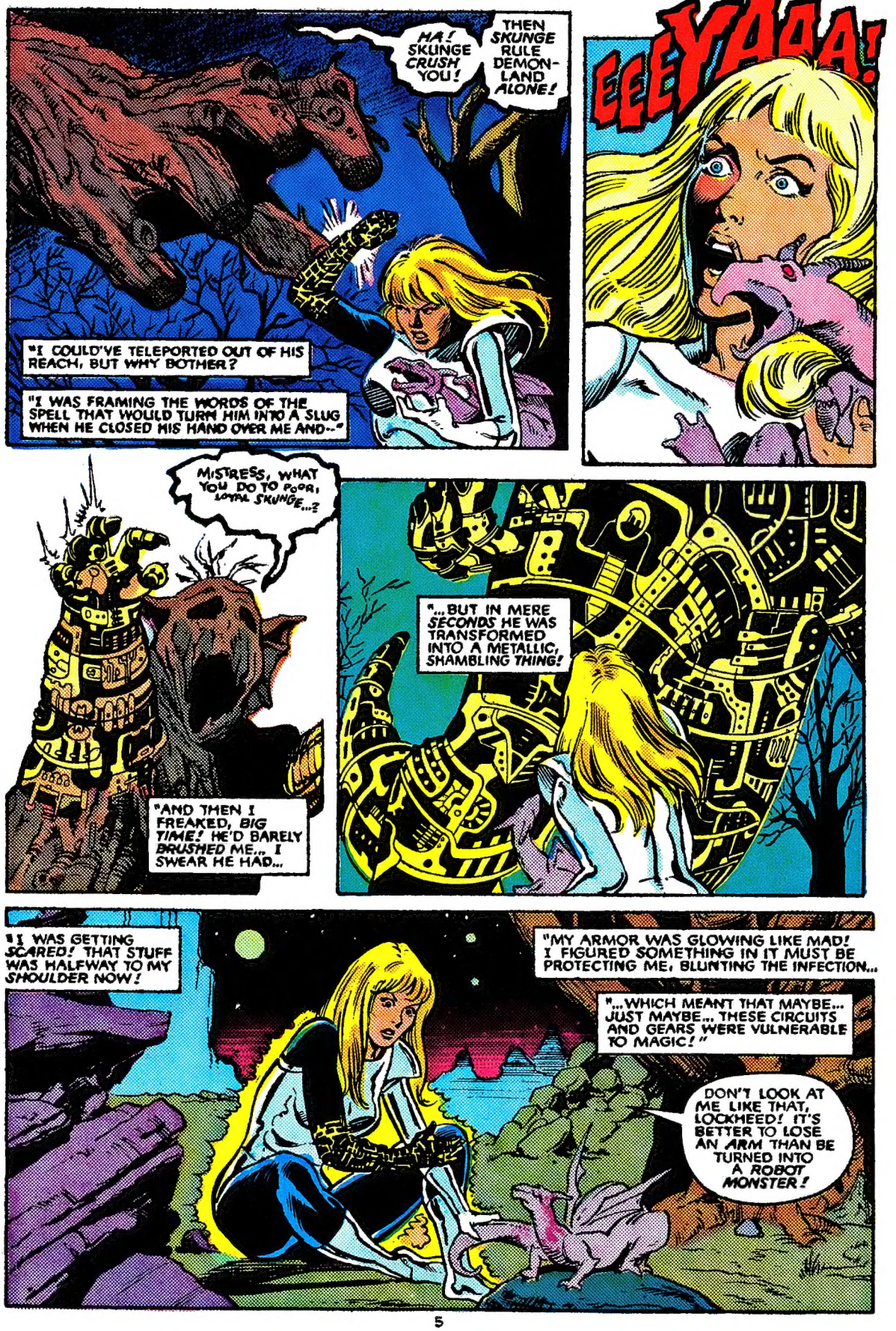
THE NEW MUTANTS · **Vol. 1, No. 53, May, 1988.** (ISSN #0747-4601) Published by MARVEL COMICS. A NEW WORLD COMPANY. James E. Galton, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Group Vice-President. Milton Schiffman, Vice-President, Production. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. Published monthly. Copyright © 1988 by Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $1.00 per copy in the U.S. and $1.25 in Canada. Subscription rate $12.00 for 12 issues. Canada and Foreign, $14.00. Printed in the U.S.A. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. THE NEW MUTANTS (including all prominent characters featured in the issue), and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are trademarks of the MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC. **POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO NEW MUTANTS, 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, 9TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, NY AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES.**

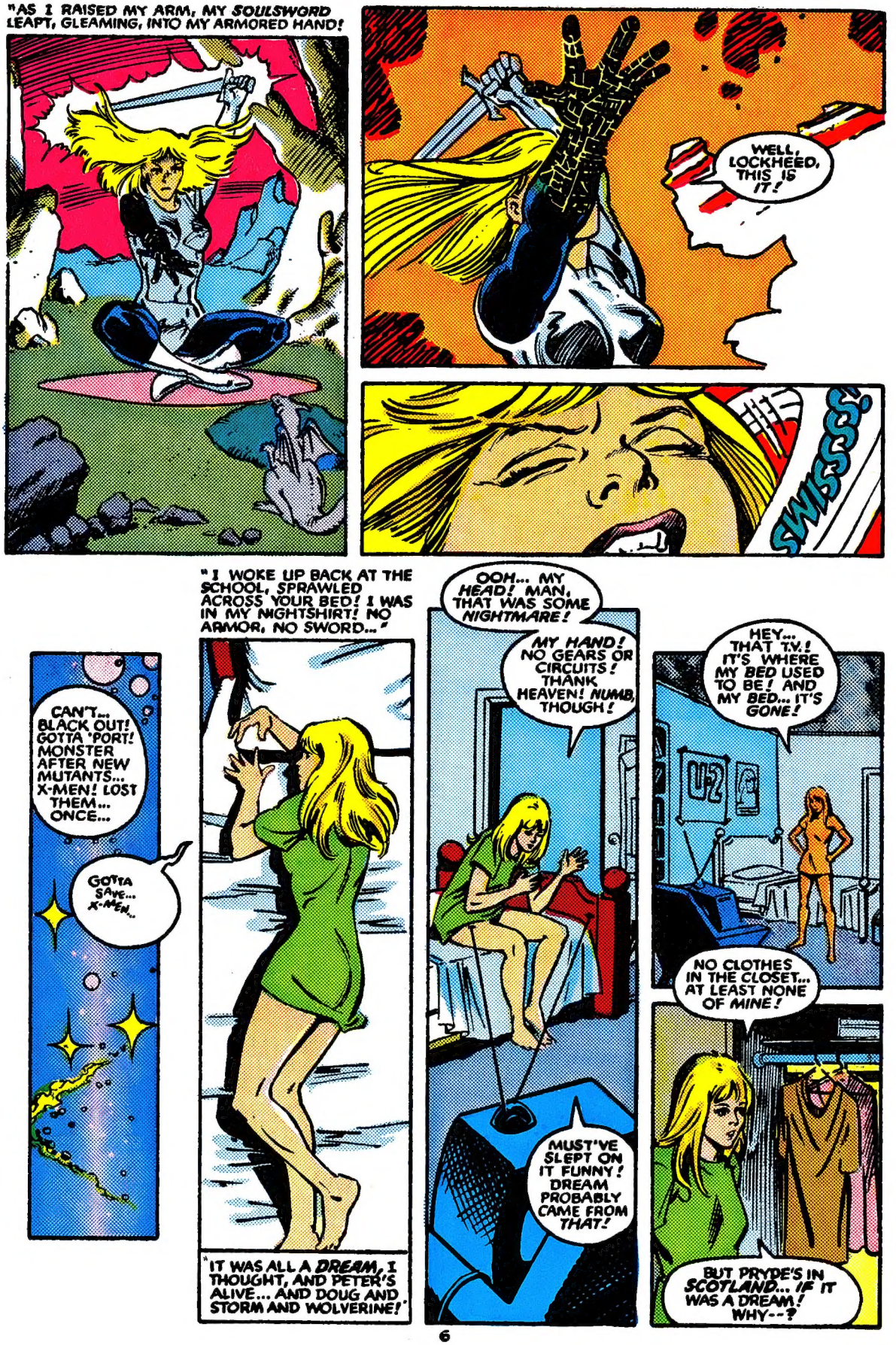
HEE-HEE-HEE-HEE! I'M WARNING YOU, PRYDE! I'M A DEMON SORCERESS! I LEARNED SPELLS IN LIMBO THAT WOULD--
WATCH IT, JERK! YOU'RE PHASING US THROUGH THE BED...
SHE USED TO BE IN LOVE WITH MY BROTHER. MY POOR... DEAD BROTHER. BUT THERE SHE WAS, TALKING ABOUT ARMOR!
...AND INTO MY BROTHER'S ROOM! Uh-oh!
PETER!
BOINGSHE MOI!
ILLYANA! KATYA! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
Uh... SORRY, PETER! IT WAS A MISTAKE! HONEST! WE WERE JUST LEAVING!
COME ON, ILLYANA! AND GRAB LOCKHEED!
SO... PETER WASN'T DEAD! HE WAS JUST... HIMSELF.
YOUR POOR BROTHER!
I DIDN'T KNOW ANYBODY COULD TURN SO RED!
HAHAHA
HAHAHA
WE LAUGHED AND LAUGHED. IT WAS... WONDERFUL.
LOOK, YOU'RE NOT STUDYING NOW--SO GIVE! WHERE'D YOU GET THE ARMOR?
WELL... REMEMBER THE NIGHT US NEW MUTANT GIRLS HAD SOME LOCAL KIDS OVER...?
IT WAS FOR THAT SPEND-THE-NIGHT PARTY? *

*IN NEW MUTANTS #21--A.

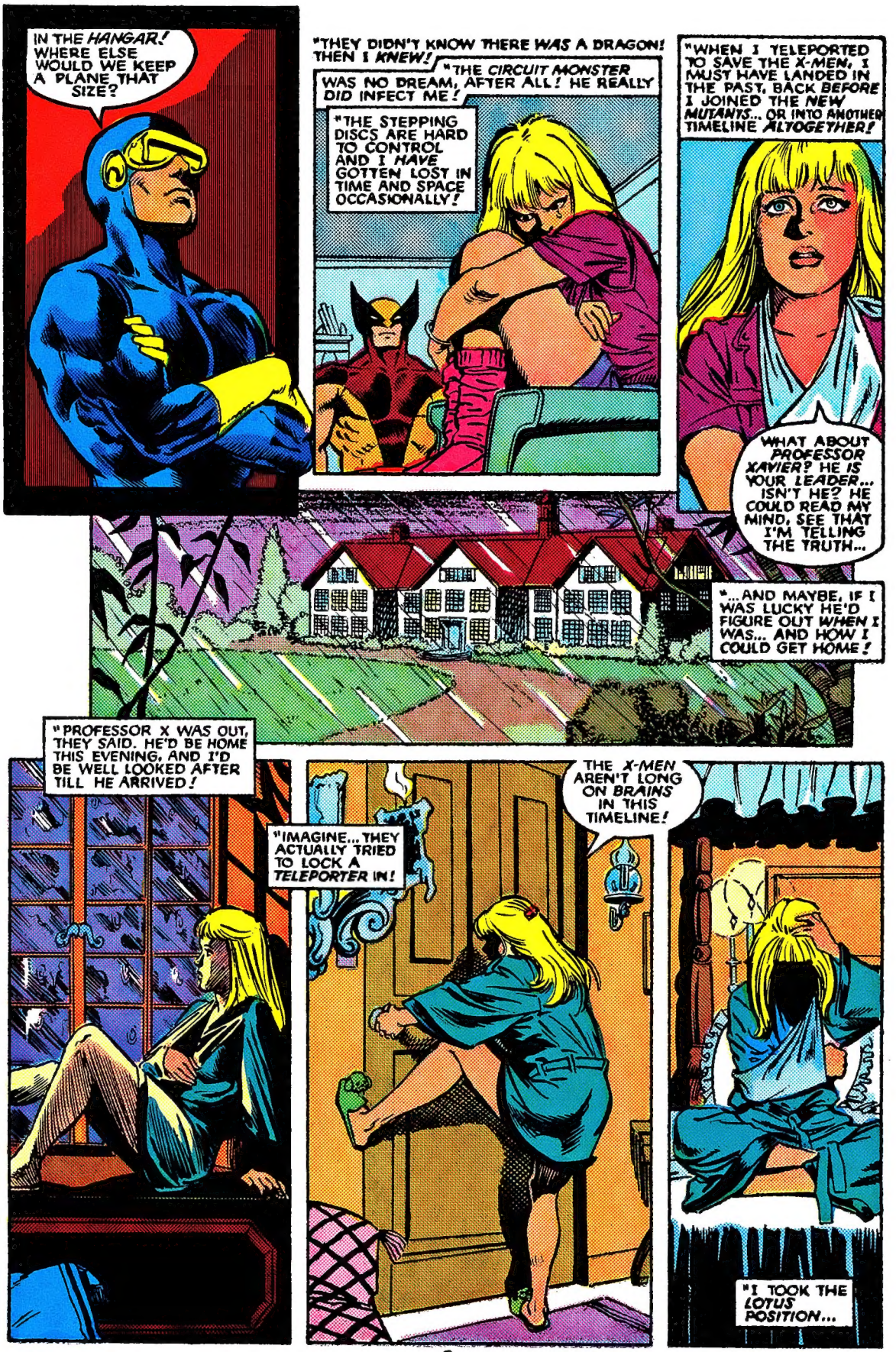

"YOU'D GONE OFF LIKE USUAL WITH THE X-MEN AND ASKED ME TO KEEP LOCKHEED, REMEMBER? AT FIRST HE WAS FINE...
"...THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN HE WENT SCREECHING DOWN THE HALL! WEIRD, RIGHT? NATURALLY, I RAN AFTER HIM!
"THERE HE WAS IN THE KITCHEN... HOLDING A STRANGE METALLIC SHAPE-SHIFTING MONSTER AT BAY!
"WE KNOW HIM AS WARLOCK!
"OF COURSE, NOW I KNOW 'LOCK'S A CONFUSED, METAL-BABY FROM OUTER SPACE, BUT RIGHT THEN HE LOOKED PRETTY DANGEROUS!
"MY SOUL-SWORD FLASHED INTO MY BARE RIGHT HAND! IT SLICED THROUGH HIM...
"...BUT SINCE IT ONLY DESTROYS THINGS OF MAGICAL ORIGIN, 'LOCK WAS UNAFFECTED!
"THEN THINGS REALLY GOT WEIRD! MY ARMOR FLASHED ON... GLOWING BRIGHT AS A STAR... COVERING THE LEFT HALF OF MY BODY!
"MY RIGHT HAND WAS COVERED WITH A FINE WEB OF CIRCUITRY, JUST LIKE THE MONSTER'S!
"I GRABBED LOCKHEED, CALLED UP A STEPPING DISC, AND TELEPORTED INTO LIMBO!
"YOU KNOW I GREW UP IN LIMBO, AND THAT I'M SORCERESS SUPREME THERE! TIME, SPACE, REALITY... IT'S DIFFERENT THERE THAN ON EARTH!
"IN LIMBO I'M PRETTY POWERFUL--I CAN WORK MY MAGIC THERE!
"BY THEN, THE GEARS AND CIRCUITS HAD SPREAD UP TO MY ELBOW! IF I WAS GONNA MAGIC THEM AWAY, I FIGURED I BETTER HURRY!

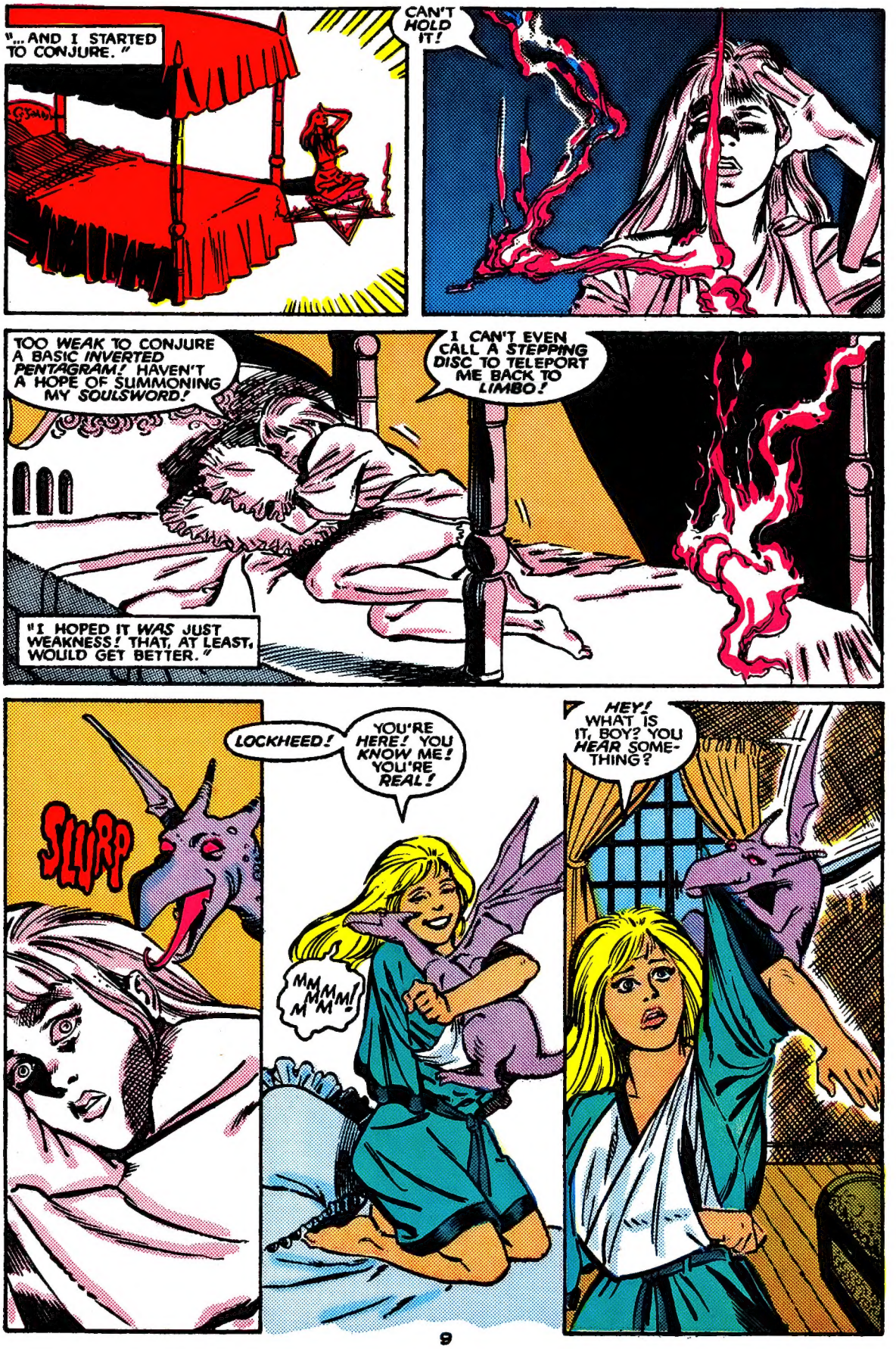

"THE FIRST THING I LEARNED AS A KID TRAPPED IN LIMBO WAS NOT TO TRUST ANYBODY!
"THE SECOND THING WAS ESPECIALLY NOT TO TRUST DEMONS!
YOU AWAY LONG TIME, MISTRESS ILLYANA! AWAY FROM LIMBO--HOME OF DEMONS!
YOU LITTLE HUMAN GIRL! YOU NOT BELONG HERE!
"IN ALL THE DIFFERENT REALITIES I'D TRAVELLED TO--LIMBO... THE EARTH... SEVERAL POSSIBLE FUTURES--
"--THE X-MEN DIED. IN SOME, I KILLED THEM. IN SOME, I COULDN'T SAVE THEM. THE RESULT WAS THE SAME.
"IT WASN'T FAIR! I'D SOONER CUT OFF MY RIGHT ARM THAN HURT THEM."
I DO BELONG HERE! I PAID FOR THE RIGHT IN BLOOD! WITH MY OWN BLOOD AND THE BLOOD OF THOSE THAT I HOLD DEAR!
THE X-MEN WERE SLAIN IN THIS REALITY! SOME DIED BECAUSE I WAS HELPLESS TO STOP IT! SOME DIED BY MY HAND!
HOW DARE YOU!
Redemption
CHRIS CLAREMONT PLOT
LOUISE SIMONSON SCRIPT
BO HAMPTON & JOE RUBINSTEIN ARTISTS
TOM ORZECHOWSKI LETTERER
NEL YOMTOV COLORIST
ANN NOCENTI EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

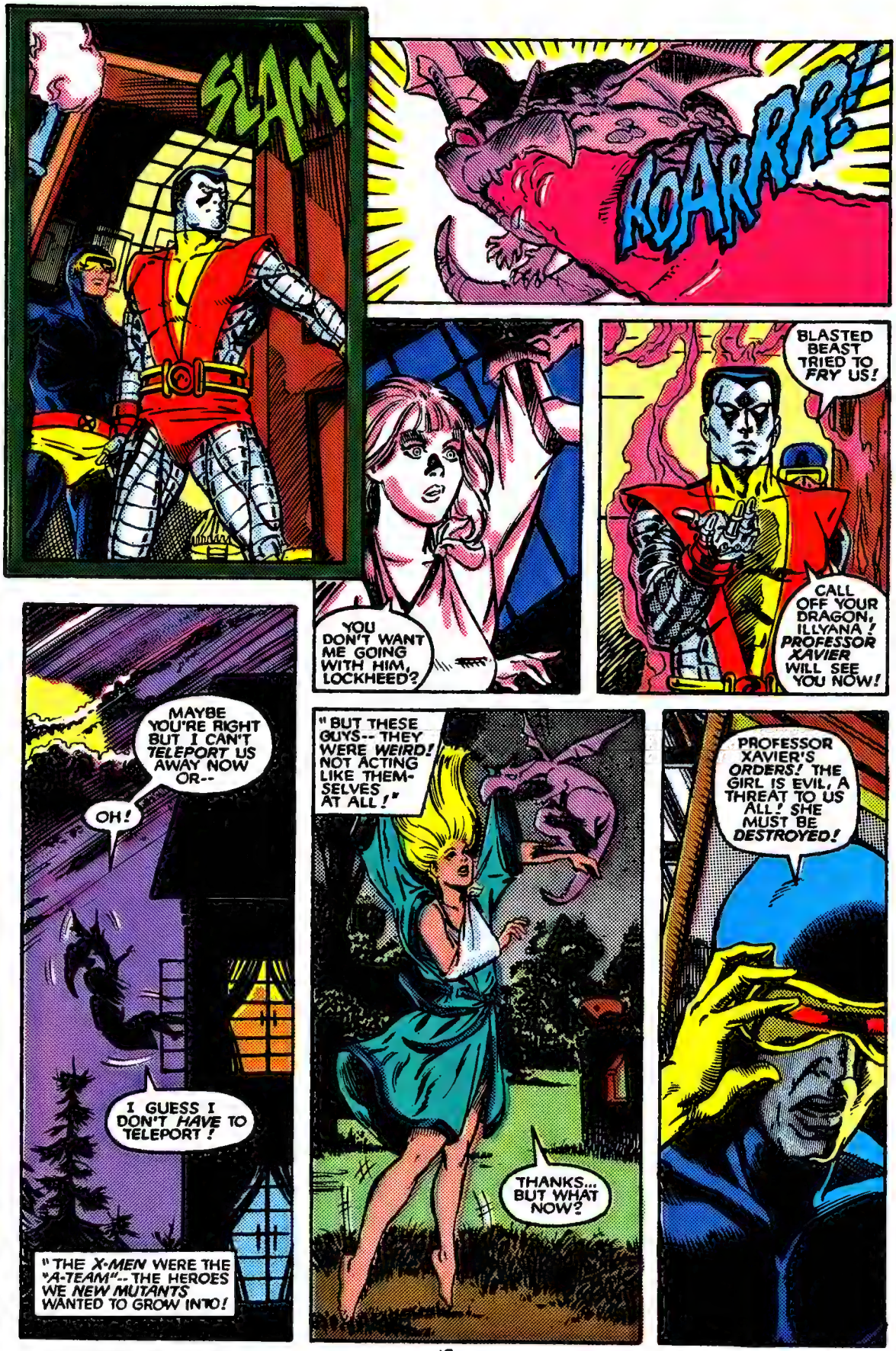

HA! SKUNGE CRUSH YOU!
THEN SKUNGE RULE DEMON-LAND ALONE!
"I COULD'VE TELEPORTED OUT OF HIS REACH, BUT WHY BOTHER?
"I WAS FRAMING THE WORDS OF THE SPELL THAT WOULD TURN HIM INTO A SLUG WHEN HE CLOSED HIS HAND OVER ME AND--"
EEEYAAA!
MISTRESS, WHAT YOU DO TO POOR, LOYAL SKUNGE...?
"AND THEN I FREAKED, BIG TIME! HE'D BARELY BRUSHED ME... I SWEAR HE HAD...
"...BUT IN MERE SECONDS HE WAS TRANSFORMED INTO A METALLIC, SHAMBLING THING!
"I WAS GETTING SCARED! THAT STUFF WAS HALFWAY TO MY SHOULDER NOW!
"MY ARMOR WAS GLOWING LIKE MAD! I FIGURED SOMETHING IN IT MUST BE PROTECTING ME, BLUNTING THE INFECTION...
"...WHICH MEANT THAT MAYBE... JUST MAYBE... THESE CIRCUITS AND GEARS WERE VULNERABLE TO MAGIC!"
DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT, LOCKHEED! IT'S BETTER TO LOSE AN ARM THAN BE TURNED INTO A ROBOT MONSTER!

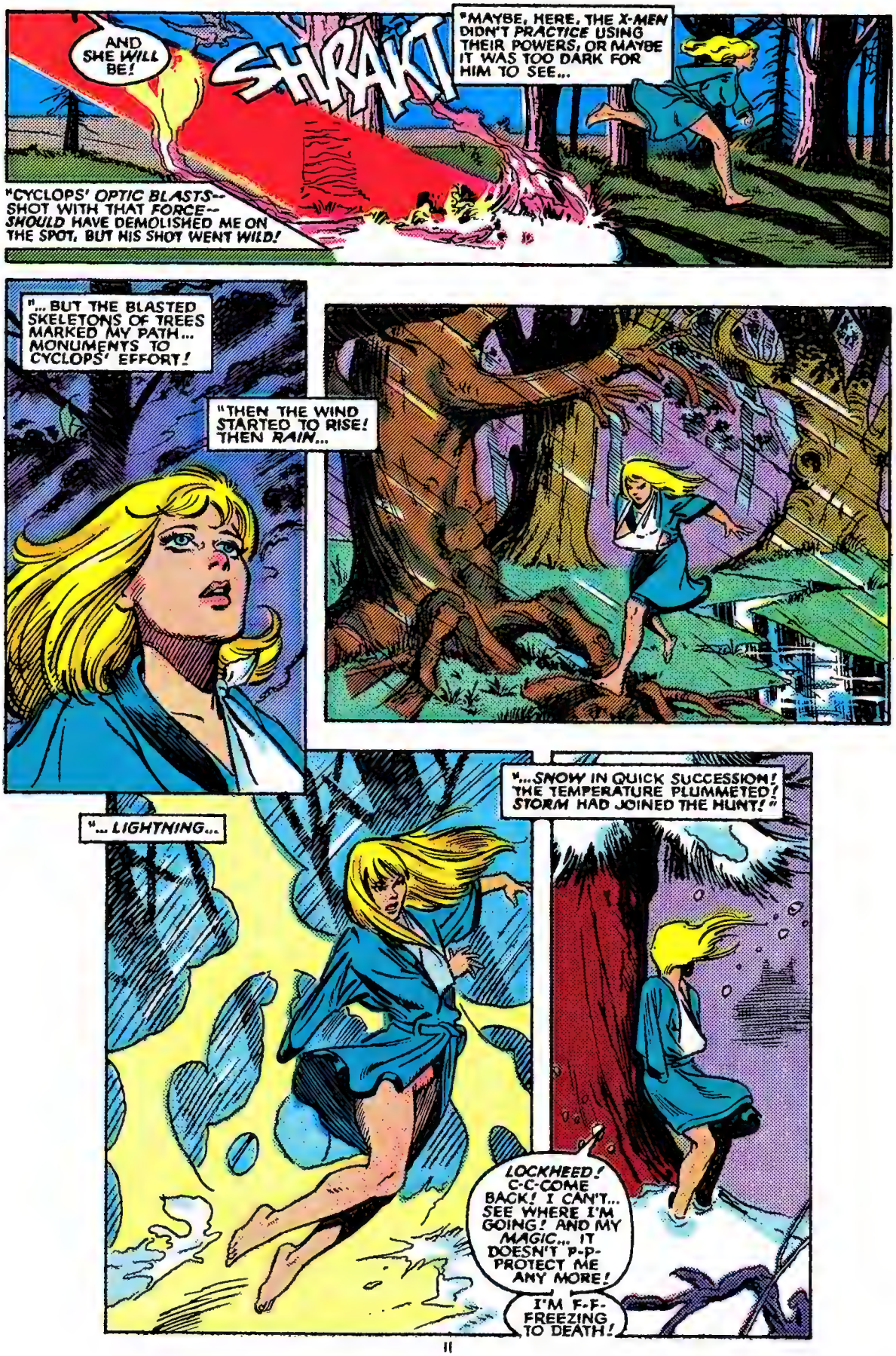

"AS I RAISED MY ARM, MY SOULSWORD LEAPT, GLEAMING, INTO MY ARMORED HAND!
WELL, LOCKHEED, THIS IS IT!
SWISSSS.
"I WOKE UP BACK AT THE SCHOOL, SPRAWLED ACROSS YOUR BED! I WAS IN MY NIGHTSHIRT! NO ARMOR, NO SWORD..."
CAN'T... BLACK OUT! GOTTA 'PORT! MONSTER AFTER NEW MUTANTS... X-MEN! LOST THEM... ONCE...
GOTTA SAVE... X-MEN...
"IT WAS ALL A DREAM, I THOUGHT, AND PETER'S ALIVE... AND DOUG AND STORM AND WOLVERINE!"
OOH... MY HEAD! MAN, THAT WAS SOME NIGHTMARE!
MY HAND! NO GEARS OR CIRCUITS! THANK HEAVEN! NUMB, THOUGH!
MUST'VE SLEPT ON IT FUNNY! DREAM PROBABLY CAME FROM THAT!
HEY... THAT T.V.! IT'S WHERE MY BED USED TO BE! AND MY BED... IT'S GONE!
U2
NO CLOTHES IN THE CLOSET... AT LEAST NONE OF MINE!
BUT PRYDE'S IN SCOTLAND... IF IT WAS A DREAM! WHY--?

OH, I GET IT! VERY-- HA! HA!-- FUNNY! ONE OF MY DOPEY TEAMMATE'S IDEA OF A SICK JOKE! PROBABLY BOBBY-- THE JERK!
ARM'S STILL NUMB! I'LL PUT IT IN A SLING AND, THEN, JERK...
...I'M GONNA GET SOME ANSWERS!
ANSWERS...? TO WHAT? WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY ROOM?
"AT YOUR SCREAM, THE X-MEN CAME RUNNING! ONLY... THEY WEREN'T THE WAY I'D LEFT THEM! NONE OF YOU WERE!
"YOU AND STORM AND MY BROTHER WERE WEARING YOUR OLD COSTUMES! AND CYCLOPS WAS STILL THE X-MEN'S LEADER!
WHO ARE YOU?
I'M ILLYANA RASPUTIN, PETER'S LITTLE SISTER! DON'T YOU KNOW ME?
LOOK, I LIVE HERE! I SHARE THIS ROOM WITH KITTY! SHE'S MY BEST FRIEND AND...
I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU BEFORE IN MY LIFE! WHO GAVE YOU THE RIGHT TO TAKE MY THINGS? GET THEM OFF, NOW!
Uh... WHERE'S LOCK-HEED?

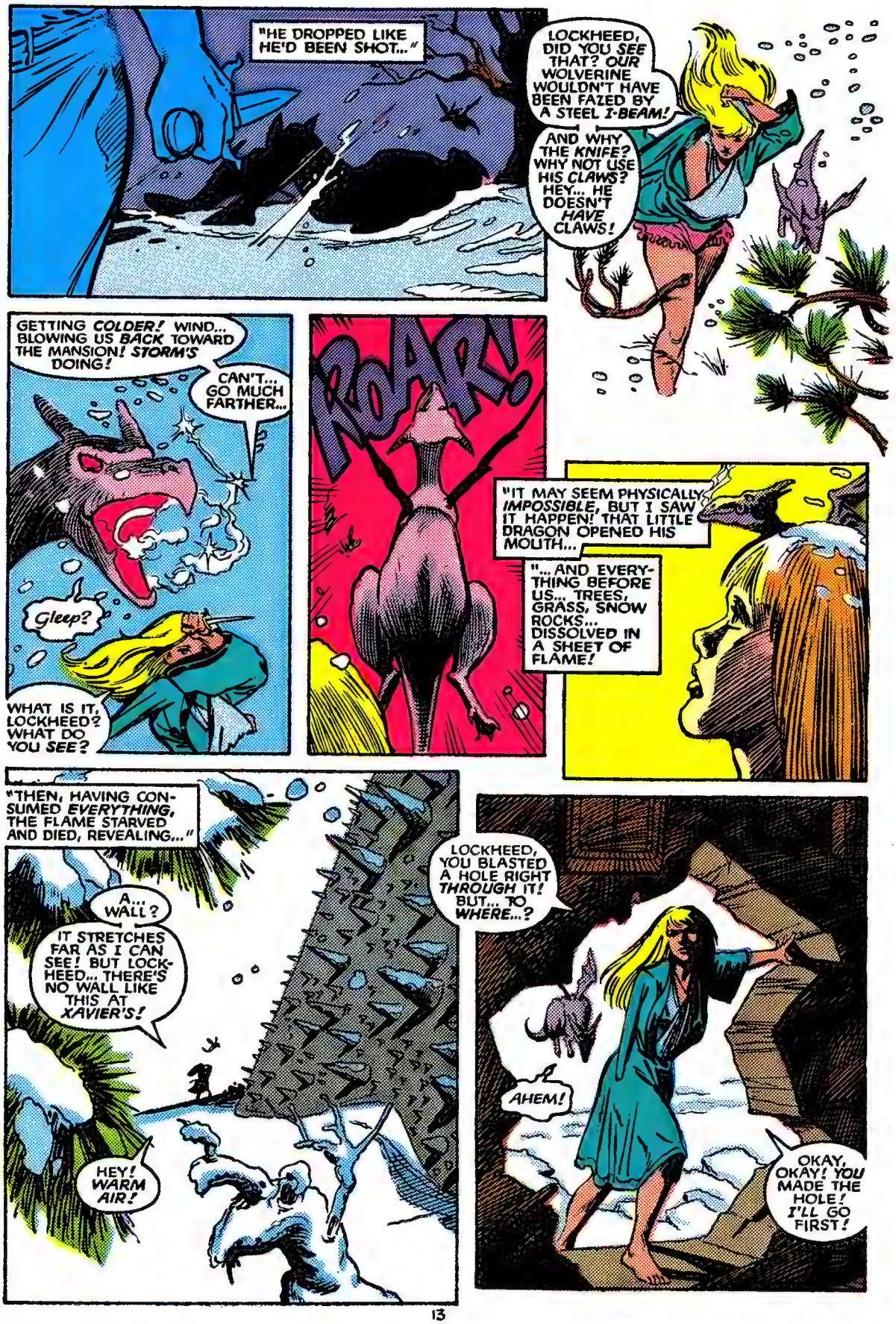

IN THE HANGAR! WHERE ELSE WOULD WE KEEP A PLANE THAT SIZE?
"THEY DIDN'T KNOW THERE WAS A DRAGON! THEN I KNEW!"
"THE CIRCUIT MONSTER WAS NO DREAM, AFTER ALL! HE REALLY DID INFECT ME!
"THE STEPPING DISCS ARE HARD TO CONTROL AND I HAVE GOTTEN LOST IN TIME AND SPACE OCCASIONALLY!
"WHEN I TELEPORTED TO SAVE THE X-MEN, I MUST HAVE LANDED IN THE PAST, BACK BEFORE I JOINED THE NEW MUTANTS... OR INTO ANOTHER TIMELINE ALTOGETHER!
WHAT ABOUT PROFESSOR XAVIER? HE IS YOUR LEADER... ISN'T HE? HE COULD READ MY MIND, SEE THAT I'M TELLING THE TRUTH...
"...AND MAYBE, IF I WAS LUCKY HE'D FIGURE OUT WHEN I WAS... AND HOW I COULD GET HOME!
"PROFESSOR X WAS OUT, THEY SAID. HE'D BE HOME THIS EVENING, AND I'D BE WELL LOOKED AFTER TILL HE ARRIVED!
"IMAGINE... THEY ACTUALLY TRIED TO LOCK A TELEPORTER IN!
THE X-MEN AREN'T LONG ON BRAINS IN THIS TIMELINE!
"I TOOK THE LOTUS POSITION...

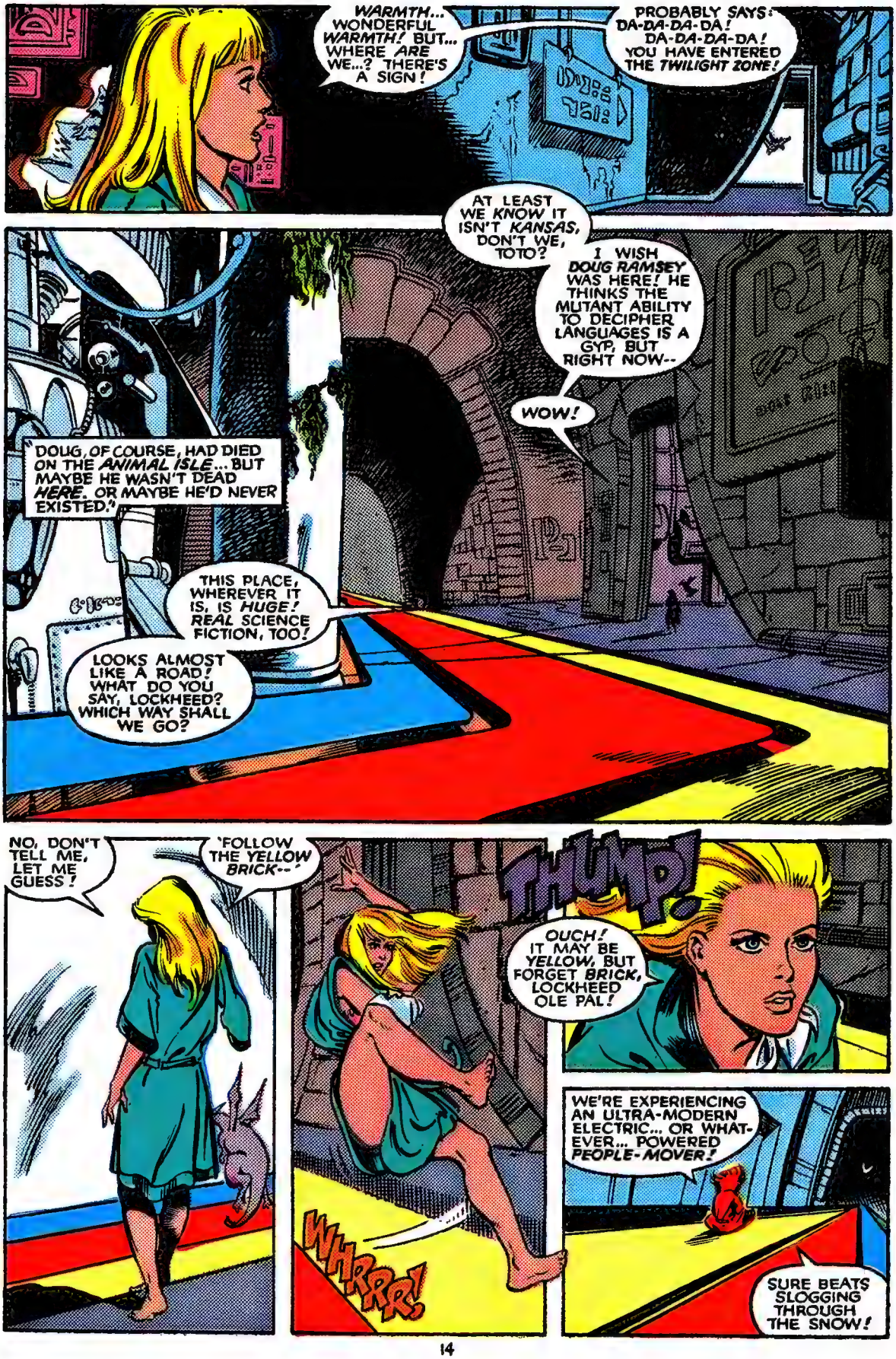

"... AND I STARTED TO CONJURE."
CAN'T HOLD IT!
TOO WEAK TO CONJURE A BASIC INVERTED PENTAGRAM! HAVEN'T A HOPE OF SUMMONING MY SOULSWORD!
I CAN'T EVEN CALL A STEPPING DISC TO TELEPORT ME BACK TO LIMBO!
"I HOPED IT WAS JUST WEAKNESS! THAT, AT LEAST, WOULD GET BETTER."
SLURP
LOCKHEED!
YOU'RE HERE! YOU KNOW ME! YOU'RE REAL!
MMMMM!
HEY! WHAT IS IT, BOY? YOU HEAR SOMETHING?

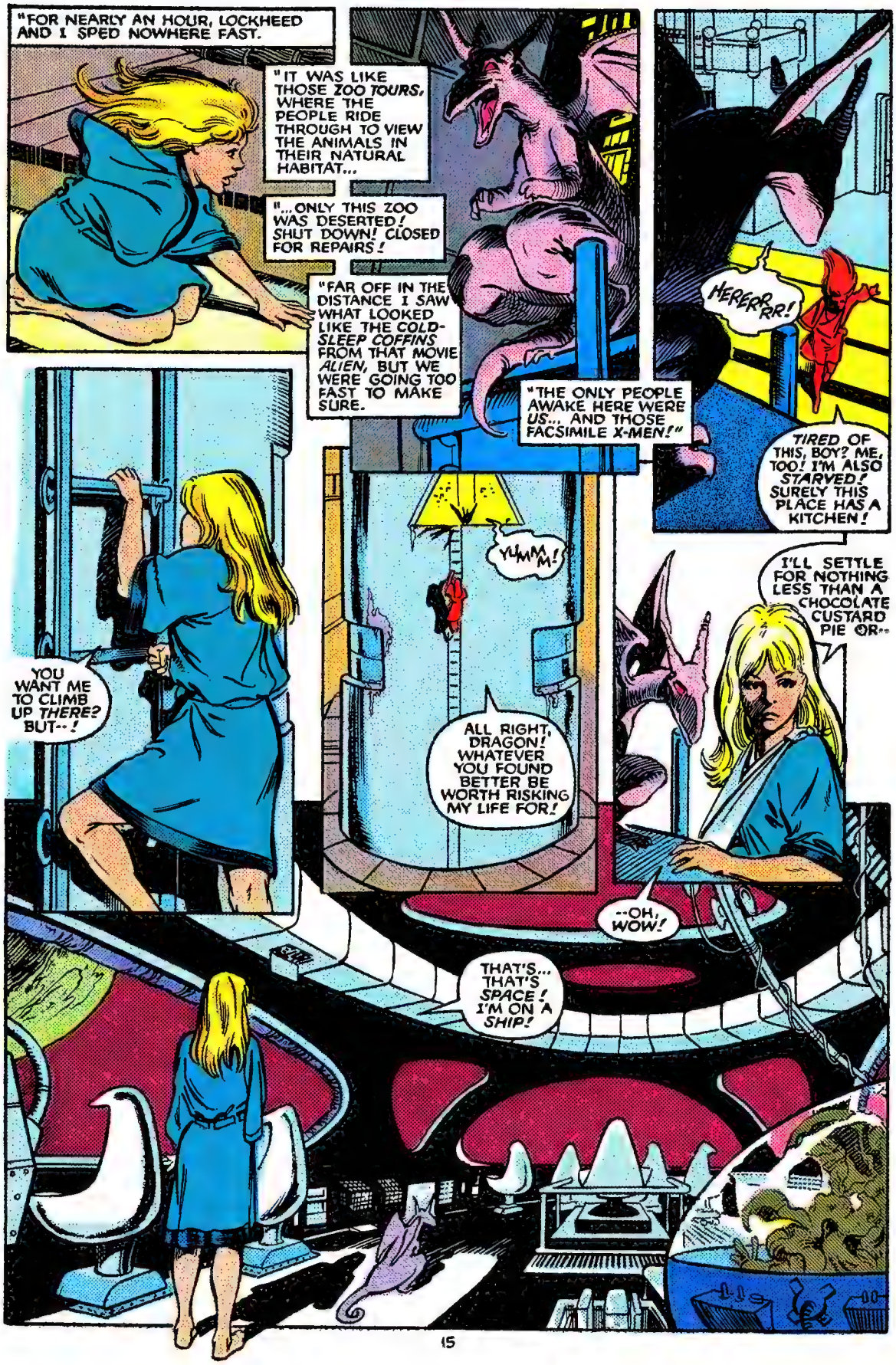

SLAM!
KOARRR!!
YOU DON'T WANT ME GOING WITH HIM, LOCKHEED?
BLASTED BEAST TRIED TO FRY US!
CALL OFF YOUR DRAGON, ILLYANA! PROFESSOR XAVIER WILL SEE YOU NOW!
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT BUT I CAN'T TELEPORT US AWAY NOW OR--
OH!
I GUESS I DON'T HAVE TO TELEPORT!
"THE X-MEN WERE THE "A-TEAM"-- THE HEROES WE NEW MUTANTS WANTED TO GROW INTO!
"BUT THESE GUYS-- THEY WERE WEIRD! NOT ACTING LIKE THEMSELVES AT ALL!"
THANKS... BUT WHAT NOW?
PROFESSOR XAVIER'S ORDERS! THE GIRL IS EVIL, A THREAT TO US ALL! SHE MUST BE DESTROYED!

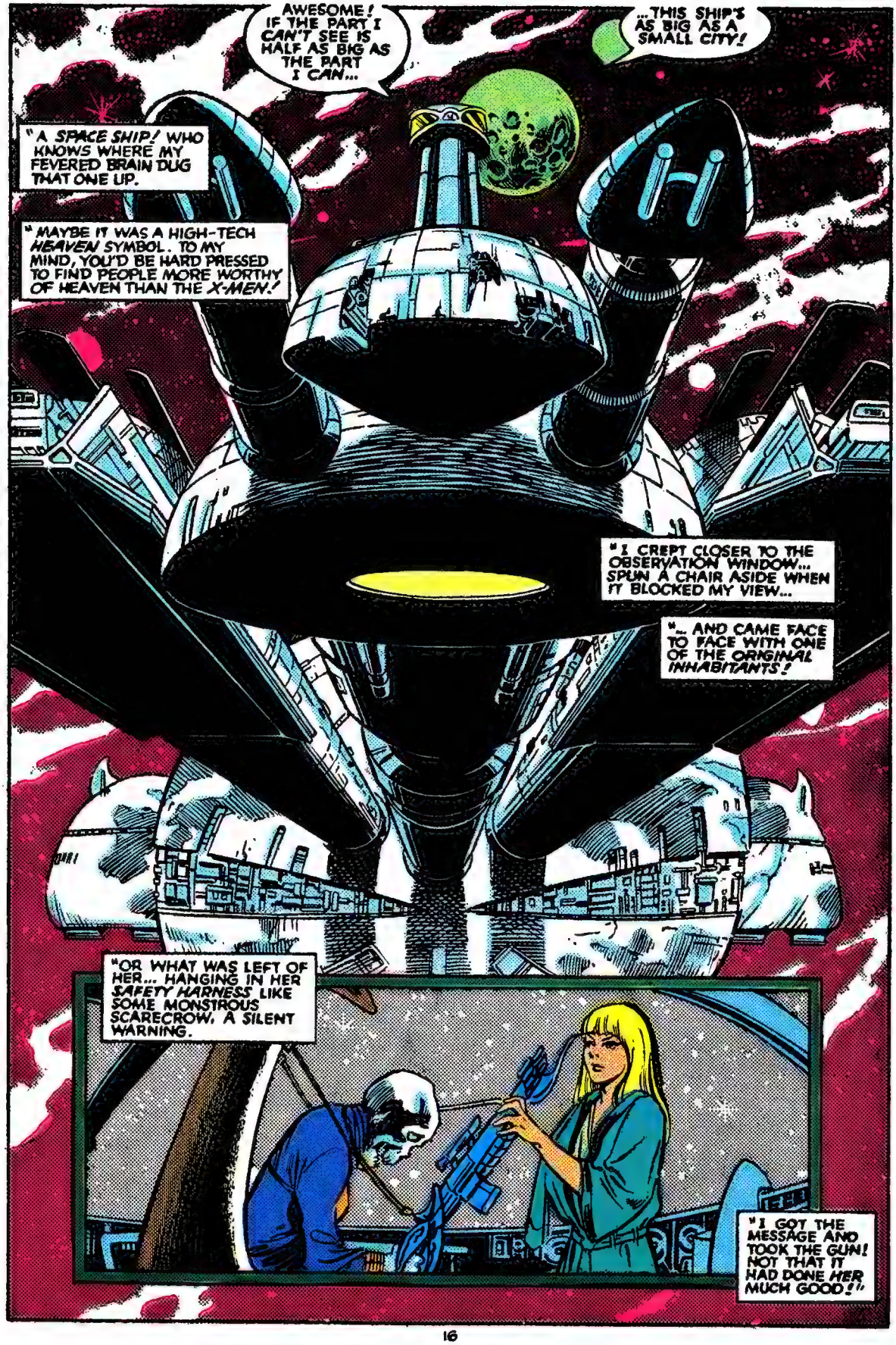

AND SHE WILL BE!
SHRAK!
"MAYBE, HERE, THE X-MEN DIDN'T PRACTICE USING THEIR POWERS, OR MAYBE IT WAS TOO DARK FOR HIM TO SEE...
"CYCLOPS' OPTIC BLASTS-- SHOT WITH THAT FORCE-- SHOULD HAVE DEMOLISHED ME ON THE SPOT. BUT HIS SHOT WENT WILD!
"... BUT THE BLASTED SKELETONS OF TREES MARKED MY PATH... MONUMENTS TO CYCLOPS' EFFORT!
"THEN THE WIND STARTED TO RISE! THEN RAIN...
"... LIGHTNING...
"...SNOW IN QUICK SUCCESSION! THE TEMPERATURE PLUMMETED! STORM HAD JOINED THE HUNT!"
LOCKHEED! C-C-COME BACK! I CAN'T... SEE WHERE I'M GOING! AND MY MAGIC... IT DOESN'T P-P-PROTECT ME ANY MORE!
I'M F-F-FREEZING TO DEATH!

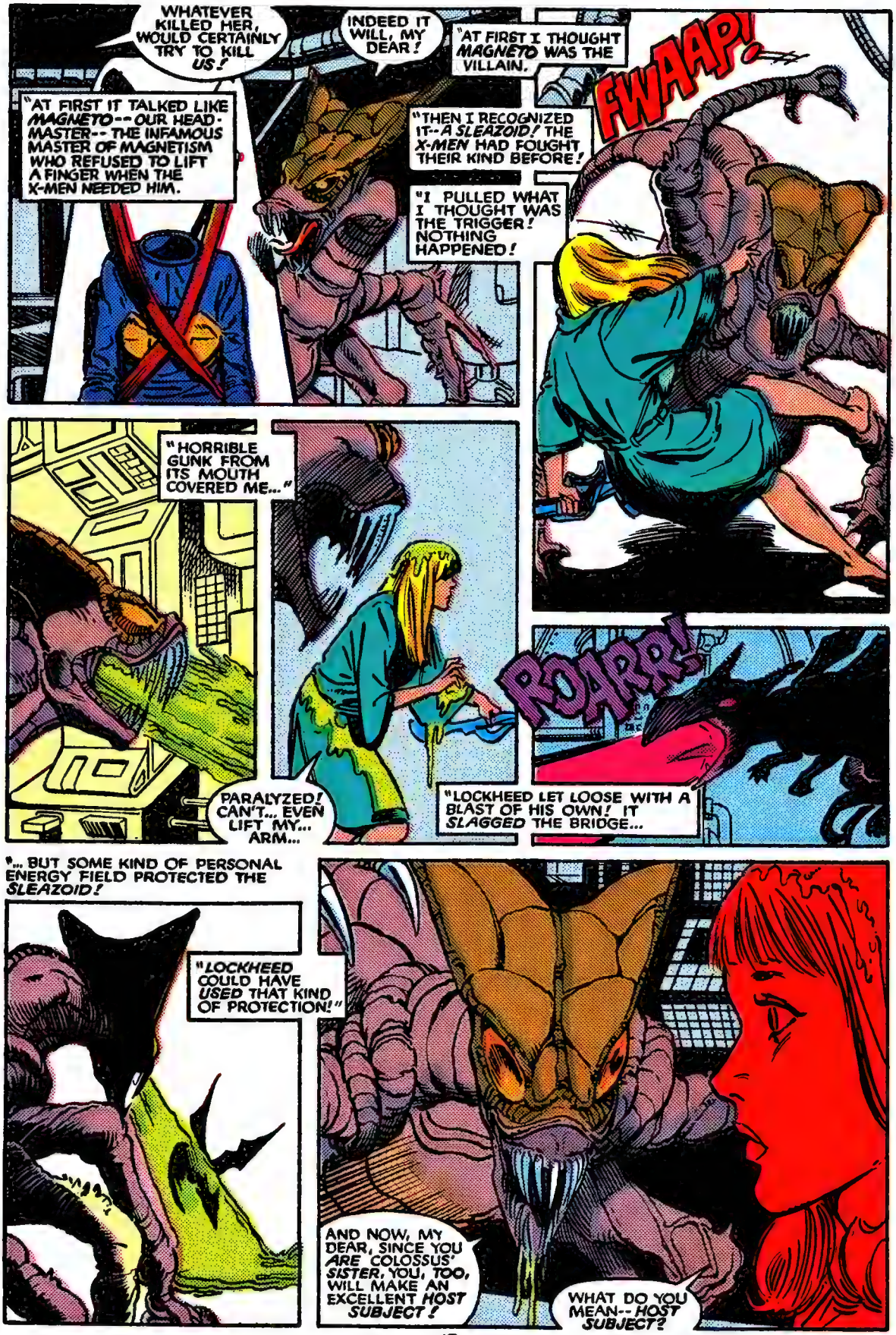
GOOD NEWS, DARLIN'!
YOU'LL BE DEAD LONG 'FORE YOU FREEZE!
WOLVERINE!
SLASH!
MY ARM!
YOU MAY HAVE UNBREAKABLE ADAMANTIUM BONES... AND YOU MAY HAVE A KNIFE...
...BUT YOU'RE NOT TAKING ME WITHOUT A FIGHT! I GIVE AS GOOD AS I GET--!
WHAK!

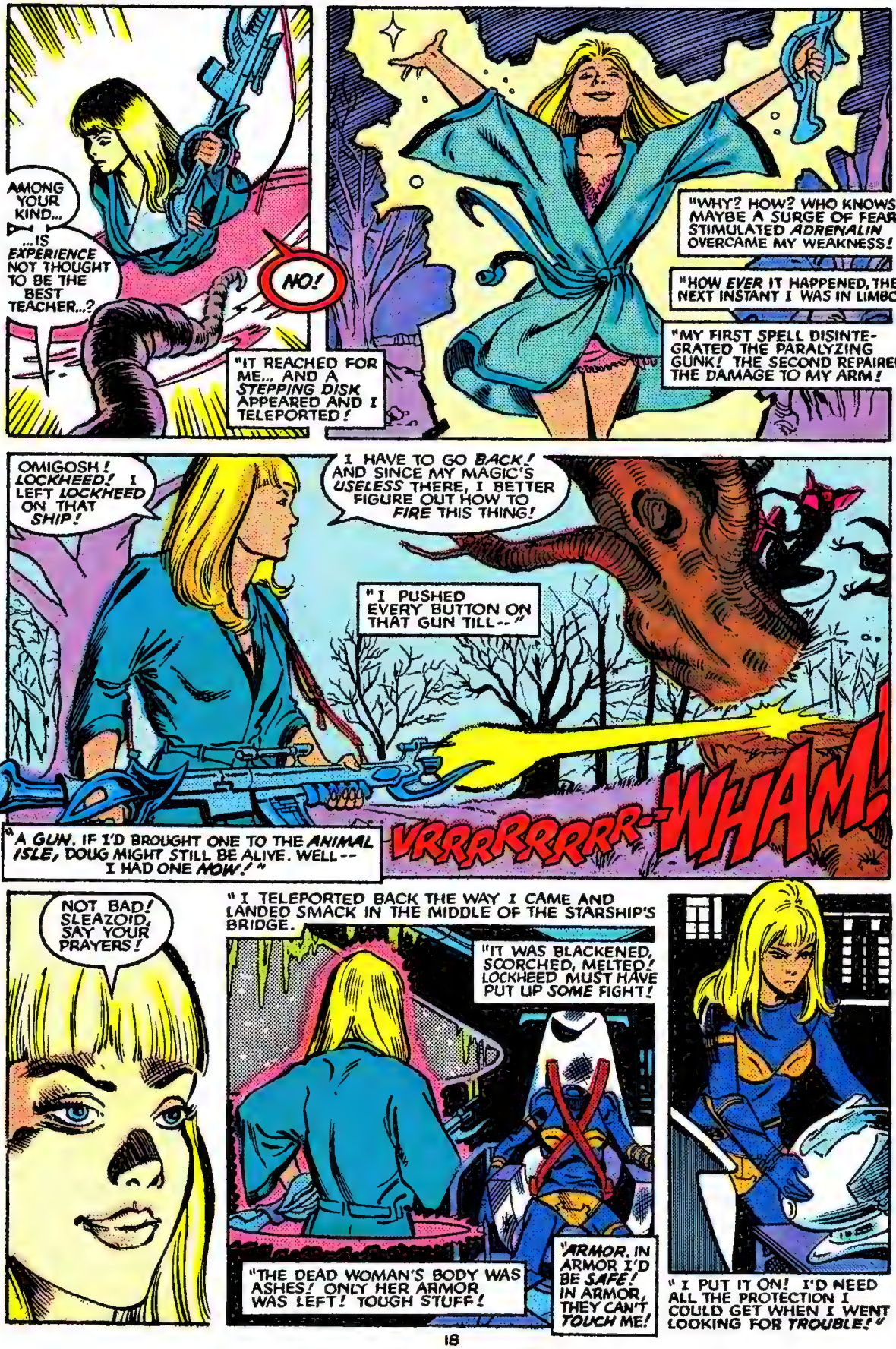

"HE DROPPED LIKE HE'D BEEN SHOT..."
LOCKHEED, DID YOU SEE THAT? OUR WOLVERINE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN FAZED BY A STEEL I-BEAM!
AND WHY THE KNIFE? WHY NOT USE HIS CLAWS? HEY... HE DOESN'T HAVE CLAWS!
GETTING COLDER! WIND... BLOWING US BACK TOWARD THE MANSION! STORM'S DOING!
CAN'T... GO MUCH FARTHER...
Gleep?
WHAT IS IT, LOCKHEED? WHAT DO YOU SEE?
ROAR!
"IT MAY SEEM PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE, BUT I SAW IT HAPPEN! THAT LITTLE DRAGON OPENED HIS MOUTH...
"... AND EVERYTHING BEFORE US... TREES, GRASS, SNOW ROCKS... DISSOLVED IN A SHEET OF FLAME!
"THEN, HAVING CONSUMED EVERYTHING, THE FLAME STARVED AND DIED, REVEALING..."
A... WALL?
IT STRETCHES FAR AS I CAN SEE! BUT LOCKHEED... THERE'S NO WALL LIKE THIS AT XAVIER'S!
HEY! WARM AIR!
LOCKHEED, YOU BLASTED A HOLE RIGHT THROUGH IT! BUT... TO WHERE...?
AHEM!
OKAY, OKAY! YOU MADE THE HOLE! I'LL GO FIRST!

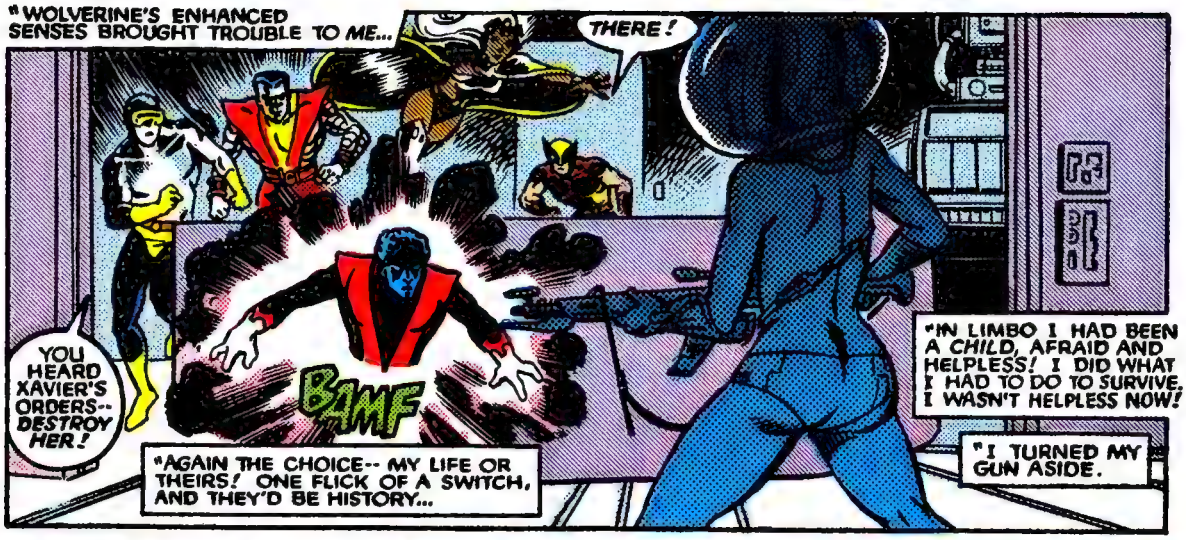

WARMTH... WONDERFUL WARMTH! BUT... WHERE ARE WE...? THERE'S A SIGN!
PROBABLY SAYS: DA-DA-DA-DA! DA-DA-DA-DA! YOU HAVE ENTERED THE TWILIGHT ZONE!
AT LEAST WE KNOW IT ISN'T KANSAS, DON'T WE, TOTO?
I WISH DOUG RAMSEY WAS HERE! HE THINKS THE MUTANT ABILITY TO DECIPHER LANGUAGES IS A GYP, BUT RIGHT NOW--
WOW!
DOUG, OF COURSE, HAD DIED ON THE ANIMAL ISLE... BUT MAYBE HE WASN'T DEAD HERE, OR MAYBE HE'D NEVER EXISTED.
THIS PLACE, WHEREVER IT IS, IS HUGE! REAL SCIENCE FICTION, TOO!
LOOKS ALMOST LIKE A ROAD! WHAT DO YOU SAY, LOCKHEED? WHICH WAY SHALL WE GO?
NO, DON'T TELL ME, LET ME GUESS!
'FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK--'
THUMP!
OUCH! IT MAY BE YELLOW, BUT FORGET BRICK, LOCKHEED OLE PAL!
WHIRRR!
WE'RE EXPERIENCING AN ULTRA-MODERN ELECTRIC... OR WHATEVER... POWERED PEOPLE-MOVER!
SURE BEATS SLOGGING THROUGH THE SNOW!

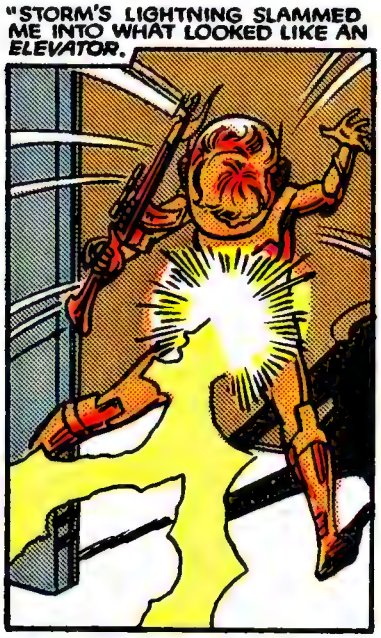

"FOR NEARLY AN HOUR, LOCKHEED AND I SPED NOWHERE FAST.
"IT WAS LIKE THOSE *ZOO TOURS*, WHERE THE PEOPLE RIDE THROUGH TO VIEW THE ANIMALS IN THEIR NATURAL HABITAT...
"...ONLY THIS ZOO WAS DESERTED! SHUT DOWN! CLOSED FOR REPAIRS!
"FAR OFF IN THE DISTANCE I SAW WHAT LOOKED LIKE THE *COLD-SLEEP COFFINS* FROM THAT MOVIE *ALIEN*, BUT WE WERE GOING TOO FAST TO MAKE SURE.
"THE ONLY PEOPLE AWAKE HERE WERE *US*... AND THOSE FACSIMILE *X-MEN!*"
HERERRRR!
TIRED OF THIS, BOY? ME, TOO! I'M ALSO *STARVED!* SURELY THIS PLACE HAS A KITCHEN!
YUMM!
I'LL SETTLE FOR NOTHING LESS THAN A CHOCOLATE CUSTARD PIE OR--
YOU WANT ME TO CLIMB UP *THERE?* BUT--!
ALL RIGHT, DRAGON! WHATEVER YOU FOUND BETTER BE WORTH RISKING MY LIFE FOR!
--OH, *WOW!*
THAT'S... THAT'S *SPACE!* I'M ON A *SHIP!*

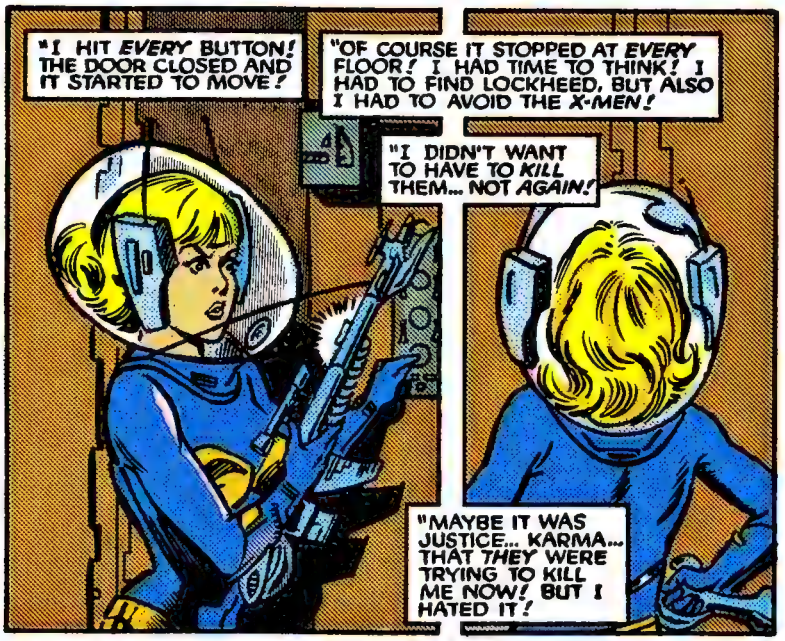

AWESOME! IF THE PART I CAN'T SEE IS HALF AS BIG AS THE PART I CAN...
...THIS SHIP'S AS BIG AS A SMALL CITY!
"A SPACE SHIP! WHO KNOWS WHERE MY FEVERED BRAIN DUG THAT ONE UP.
"MAYBE IT WAS A HIGH-TECH HEAVEN SYMBOL. TO MY MIND, YOU'D BE HARD PRESSED TO FIND PEOPLE MORE WORTHY OF HEAVEN THAN THE X-MEN!
"I CREPT CLOSER TO THE OBSERVATION WINDOW... SPUN A CHAIR ASIDE WHEN IT BLOCKED MY VIEW...
"... AND CAME FACE TO FACE WITH ONE OF THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS!
"OR WHAT WAS LEFT OF HER... HANGING IN HER SAFETY HARNESS LIKE SOME MONSTROUS SCARECROW, A SILENT WARNING.
"I GOT THE MESSAGE AND TOOK THE GUN! NOT THAT IT HAD DONE HER MUCH GOOD!"

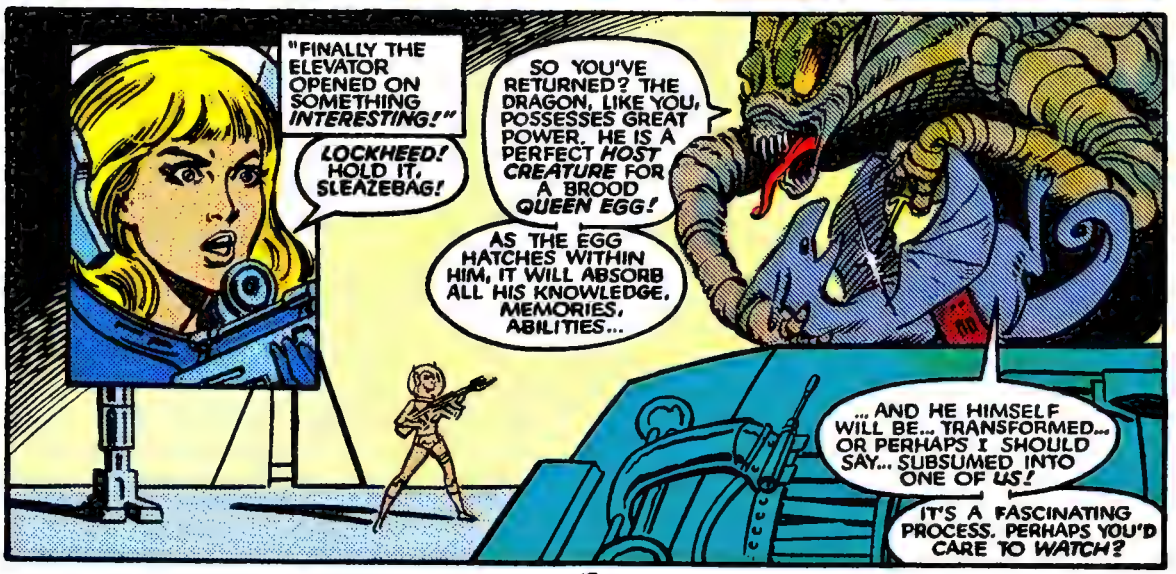

WHATEVER KILLED HER, WOULD CERTAINLY TRY TO KILL US!
INDEED IT WILL, MY DEAR!
"AT FIRST I THOUGHT MAGNETO WAS THE VILLAIN.
"AT FIRST IT TALKED LIKE MAGNETO--OUR HEAD-MASTER--THE INFAMOUS MASTER OF MAGNETISM WHO REFUSED TO LIFT A FINGER WHEN THE X-MEN NEEDED HIM.
"THEN I RECOGNIZED IT--A SLEAZOID! THE X-MEN HAD FOUGHT THEIR KIND BEFORE!
FWAAP!
"I PULLED WHAT I THOUGHT WAS THE TRIGGER! NOTHING HAPPENED!
"HORRIBLE GUNK FROM ITS MOUTH COVERED ME..."
PARALYZED! CAN'T... EVEN LIFT MY... ARM...
"LOCKHEED LET LOOSE WITH A BLAST OF HIS OWN! IT SLAGGED THE BRIDGE...
ROARR!
"... BUT SOME KIND OF PERSONAL ENERGY FIELD PROTECTED THE SLEAZOID!
"LOCKHEED COULD HAVE USED THAT KIND OF PROTECTION!"
AND NOW, MY DEAR, SINCE YOU ARE COLOSSUS' SISTER, YOU, TOO, WILL MAKE AN EXCELLENT HOST SUBJECT!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN--HOST SUBJECT?

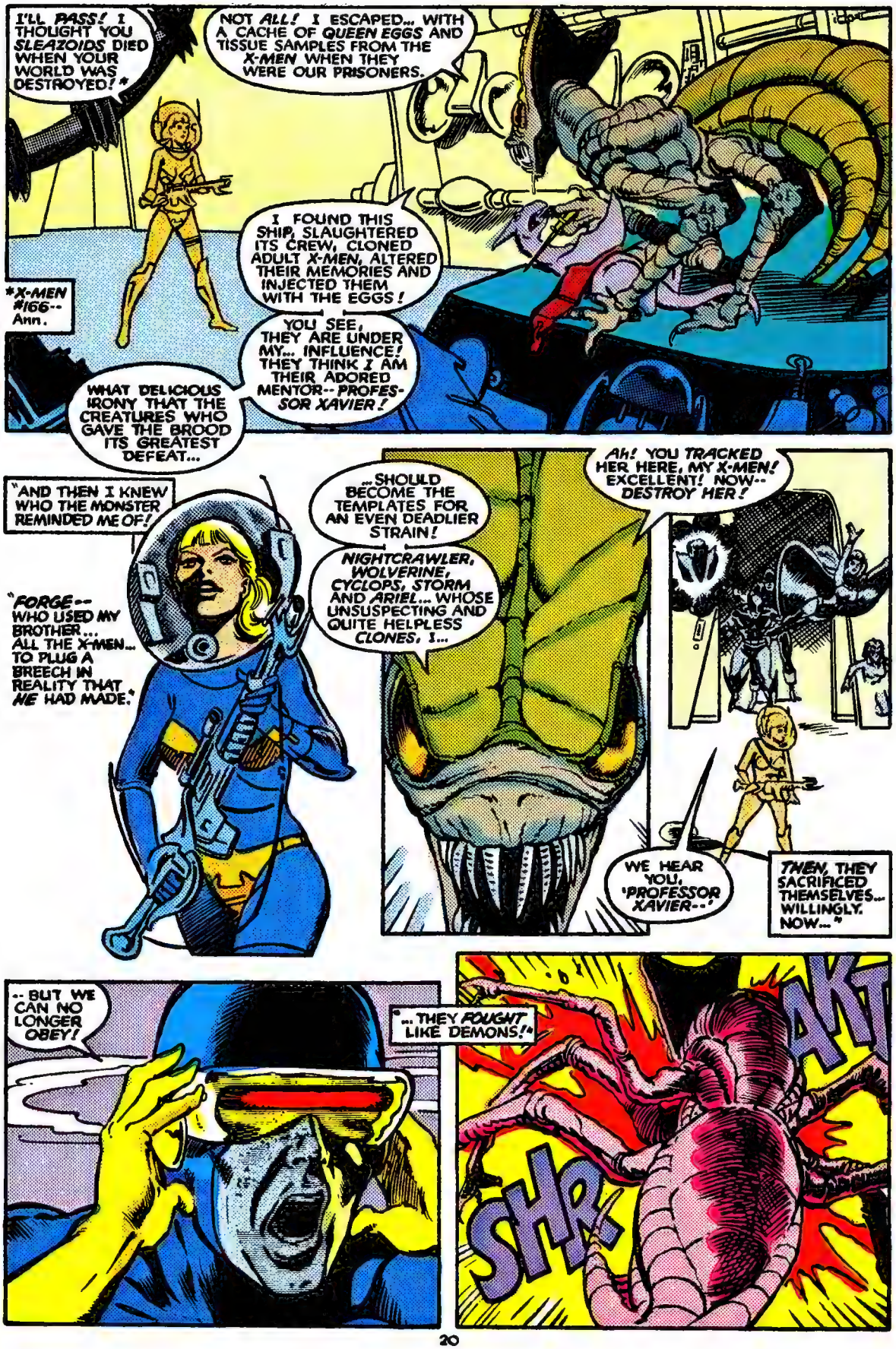

AMONG YOUR KIND...
...IS EXPERIENCE NOT THOUGHT TO BE THE BEST TEACHER...?
NO!
"IT REACHED FOR ME... AND A STEPPING DISK APPEARED AND I TELEPORTED!
"WHY? HOW? WHO KNOWS? MAYBE A SURGE OF FEAR-STIMULATED ADRENALIN OVERCAME MY WEAKNESS!
"HOW EVER IT HAPPENED, THE NEXT INSTANT I WAS IN LIMBO!
"MY FIRST SPELL DISINTEGRATED THE PARALYZING GUNK! THE SECOND REPAIRED THE DAMAGE TO MY ARM!
OMIGOSH! LOCKHEED! I LEFT LOCKHEED ON THAT SHIP!
I HAVE TO GO BACK! AND SINCE MY MAGIC'S USELESS THERE, I BETTER FIGURE OUT HOW TO FIRE THIS THING!
"I PUSHED EVERY BUTTON ON THAT GUN TILL--"
VRRRRRRRR-
WHAM!
"A GUN. IF I'D BROUGHT ONE TO THE ANIMAL ISLE, DOUG MIGHT STILL BE ALIVE. WELL-- I HAD ONE NOW!"
NOT BAD! SLEAZOID, SAY YOUR PRAYERS!
"I TELEPORTED BACK THE WAY I CAME AND LANDED SMACK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STARSHIP'S BRIDGE.
"IT WAS BLACKENED, SCORCHED, MELTED! LOCKHEED MUST HAVE PUT UP SOME FIGHT!
"THE DEAD WOMAN'S BODY WAS ASHES! ONLY HER ARMOR WAS LEFT! TOUGH STUFF!
"ARMOR. IN ARMOR I'D BE SAFE! IN ARMOR, THEY CAN'T TOUCH ME!
"I PUT IT ON! I'D NEED ALL THE PROTECTION I COULD GET WHEN I WENT LOOKING FOR TROUBLE!"


"WOLVERINE'S ENHANCED SENSES BROUGHT TROUBLE TO ME...
THERE!
YOU HEARD XAVIER'S ORDERS-- DESTROY HER!
BAMF
"AGAIN THE CHOICE-- MY LIFE OR THEIRS! ONE FLICK OF A SWITCH, AND THEY'D BE HISTORY...
"IN LIMBO I HAD BEEN A CHILD, AFRAID AND HELPLESS! I DID WHAT I HAD TO DO TO SURVIVE. I WASN'T HELPLESS NOW!
"I TURNED MY GUN ASIDE.


"STORM'S LIGHTNING SLAMMED ME INTO WHAT LOOKED LIKE AN ELEVATOR.

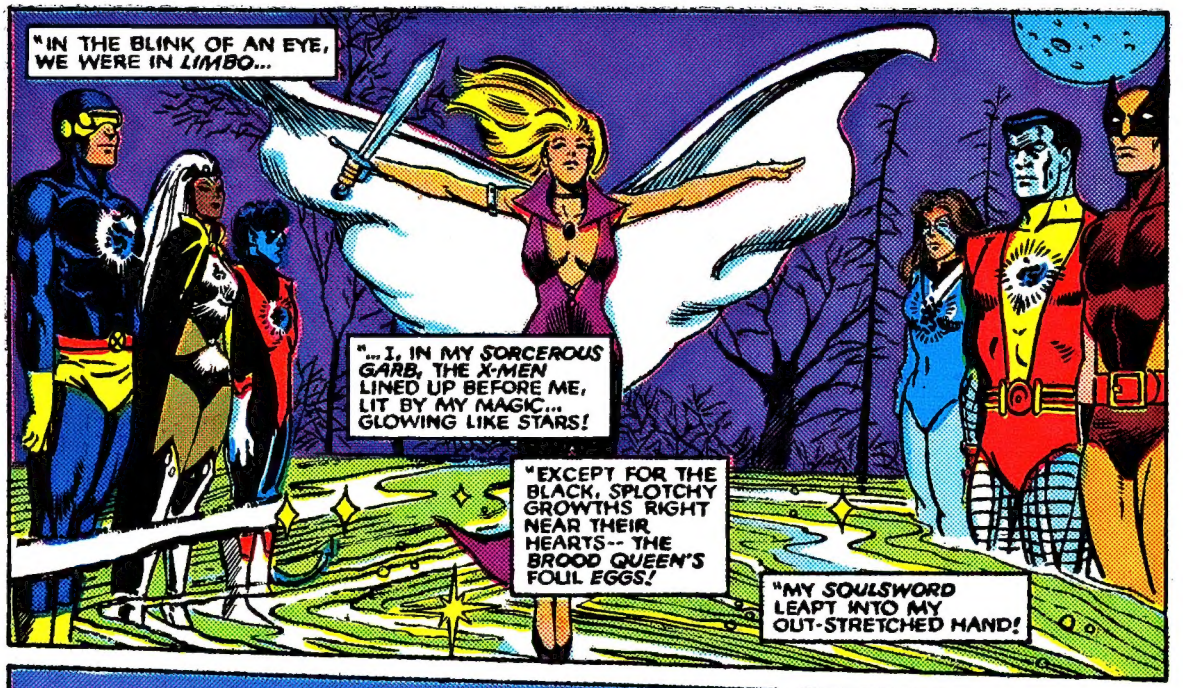

"I HIT EVERY BUTTON! THE DOOR CLOSED AND IT STARTED TO MOVE!
"OF COURSE IT STOPPED AT EVERY FLOOR! I HAD TIME TO THINK! I HAD TO FIND LOCKHEED, BUT ALSO I HAD TO AVOID THE X-MEN!
"I DIDN'T WANT TO HAVE TO KILL THEM... NOT AGAIN!
"MAYBE IT WAS JUSTICE... KARMA... THAT THEY WERE TRYING TO KILL ME NOW! BUT I HATED IT!

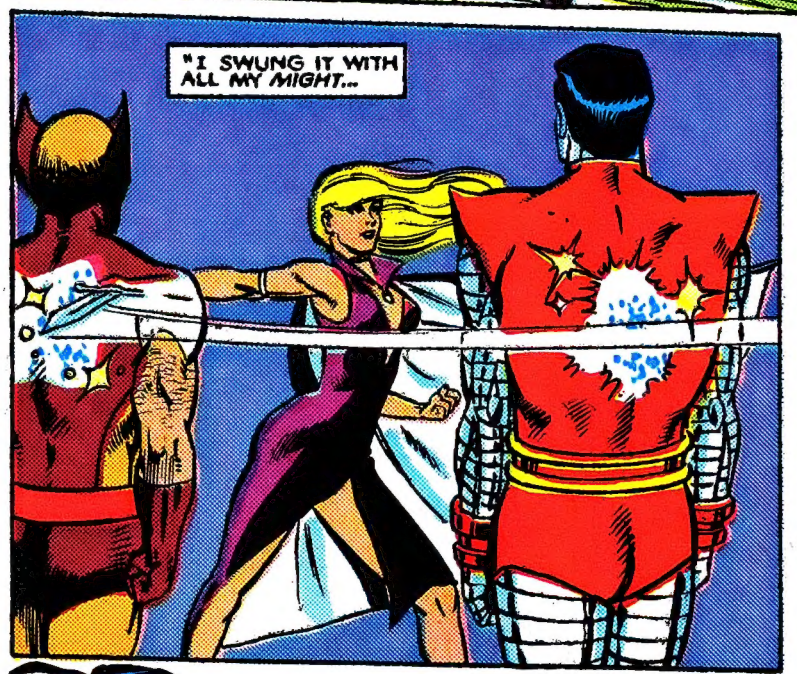

"FINALLY THE ELEVATOR OPENED ON SOMETHING INTERESTING!"
LOCKHEED! HOLD IT, SLEAZEBAG!
SO YOU'VE RETURNED? THE DRAGON, LIKE YOU, POSSESSES GREAT POWER. HE IS A PERFECT HOST CREATURE FOR A BROOD QUEEN EGG!
AS THE EGG HATCHES WITHIN HIM, IT WILL ABSORB ALL HIS KNOWLEDGE, MEMORIES, ABILITIES...
... AND HE HIMSELF WILL BE... TRANSFORMED... OR PERHAPS I SHOULD SAY... SUBSUMED INTO ONE OF US!
IT'S A FASCINATING PROCESS. PERHAPS YOU'D CARE TO WATCH?

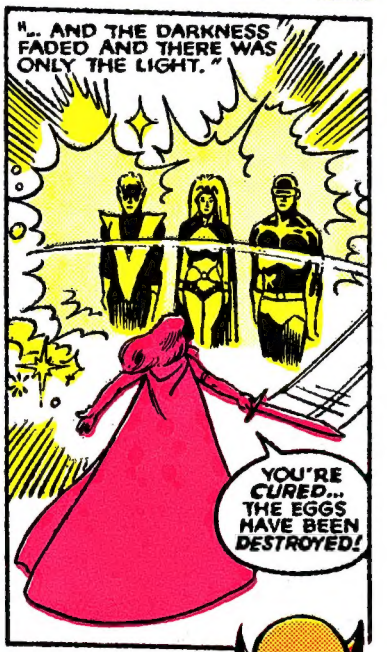

I'LL PASS! I THOUGHT YOU SLEAZOIDS DIED WHEN YOUR WORLD WAS DESTROYED!*
NOT ALL! I ESCAPED... WITH A CACHE OF QUEEN EGGS AND TISSUE SAMPLES FROM THE X-MEN WHEN THEY WERE OUR PRISONERS.
I FOUND THIS SHIP, SLAUGHTERED ITS CREW, CLONED ADULT X-MEN, ALTERED THEIR MEMORIES AND INJECTED THEM WITH THE EGGS!
YOU SEE, THEY ARE UNDER MY... INFLUENCE! THEY THINK I AM THEIR ADORED MENTOR-- PROFESSOR XAVIER!
WHAT DELICIOUS IRONY THAT THE CREATURES WHO GAVE THE BROOD ITS GREATEST DEFEAT...
*X-MEN #166-- Ann.
"AND THEN I KNEW WHO THE MONSTER REMINDED ME OF!
"FORGE-- WHO USED MY BROTHER... ALL THE X-MEN... TO PLUG A BREECH IN REALITY THAT ME HAD MADE.*
...SHOULD BECOME THE TEMPLATES FOR AN EVEN DEADLIER STRAIN!
NIGHTCRAWLER, WOLVERINE, CYCLOPS, STORM AND ARIEL... WHOSE UNSUSPECTING AND QUITE HELPLESS CLONES, I...
AH! YOU TRACKED HER HERE, MY X-MEN! EXCELLENT! NOW-- DESTROY HER!
WE HEAR YOU, 'PROFESSOR XAVIER--'
THEN, THEY SACRIFICED THEMSELVES... WILLINGLY. NOW...*
-- BUT WE CAN NO LONGER OBEY!
"... THEY FOUGHT LIKE DEMONS!*
AK
SHR

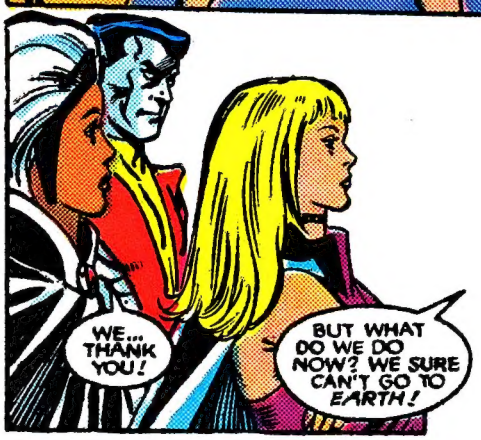
WE HEARD IT ALL, MONSTER! HOW YOU TOOK US... USED US!
VROOOM!
CRACK!
SLAM
BAM-F
HOW WE WILL DIE HORRIBLY, TRANSFORMED INTO ONE OF YOU!
AT LEAST, LITTLE BEAST, YOU ARE FREE OF THIS DREADFUL CURSE!
THE MACHINES, COLOSSUS-- SMASH 'EM ALL!
RIP!
SPUTTER!
SPARKS, CRACKLE!..
SUCKER'S USIN' THE SMOKE AS COVER! MAKIN' A BREAK FOR IT!
HE WON'T GET FAR!
VRRRR!
WHAM
heh-heh-heh!

ROAAAR!
"THE DRAGON DID WHAT CAME NATURALLY. AND SHOWED ME WHAT I HAD TO DO."
SERVES THE SUCKER RIGHT!
WE HEARD... EVERYTHING! HE GREW US! USED US!
WE WERE... HYPNOTIZED. HE MADE US BELIEVE HE WAS OUR TEACHER... OUR FRIEND!
HE TRIED TO MAKE US KILL YOU, AN INNOCENT CHILD!
"NOT ALL THAT INNOCENT, BROTHER MINE, BUT THIS DIDN'T SEEM THE TIME FOR TRUE CONFESSIONS!
"FOR A WHILE WE ALL STARED OUT AT THE STARS. SO BRIGHT, SO FULL OF PROMISE, AND YET..."
WE GOTTA FACE FACTS! WE'RE LAB SPECIMENS AN' MONSTER FODDER! EACH OF US HAS ONE O' THE SUCKERS GROWIN' IN HIM!
BETTER KILL US, ILLYANA! NOW, WHILE YOU CAN! 'FORE MORE PEOPLE DIE!
NO!
YOU'RE CLONES, YEAH, BUT WHAT YOU ASK... THAT PROVES YOU'RE HUMAN... THE BEST KIND OF HUMAN!
YOU WERE GIVEN BODIES LIKE MY FRIENDS... AND I THINK YOU'RE LIKE THEM IN OTHER WAYS!
IN ANOTHER TIME AND PLACE, I SAW THE X-MEN DIE! THE DYING STOPS HERE!

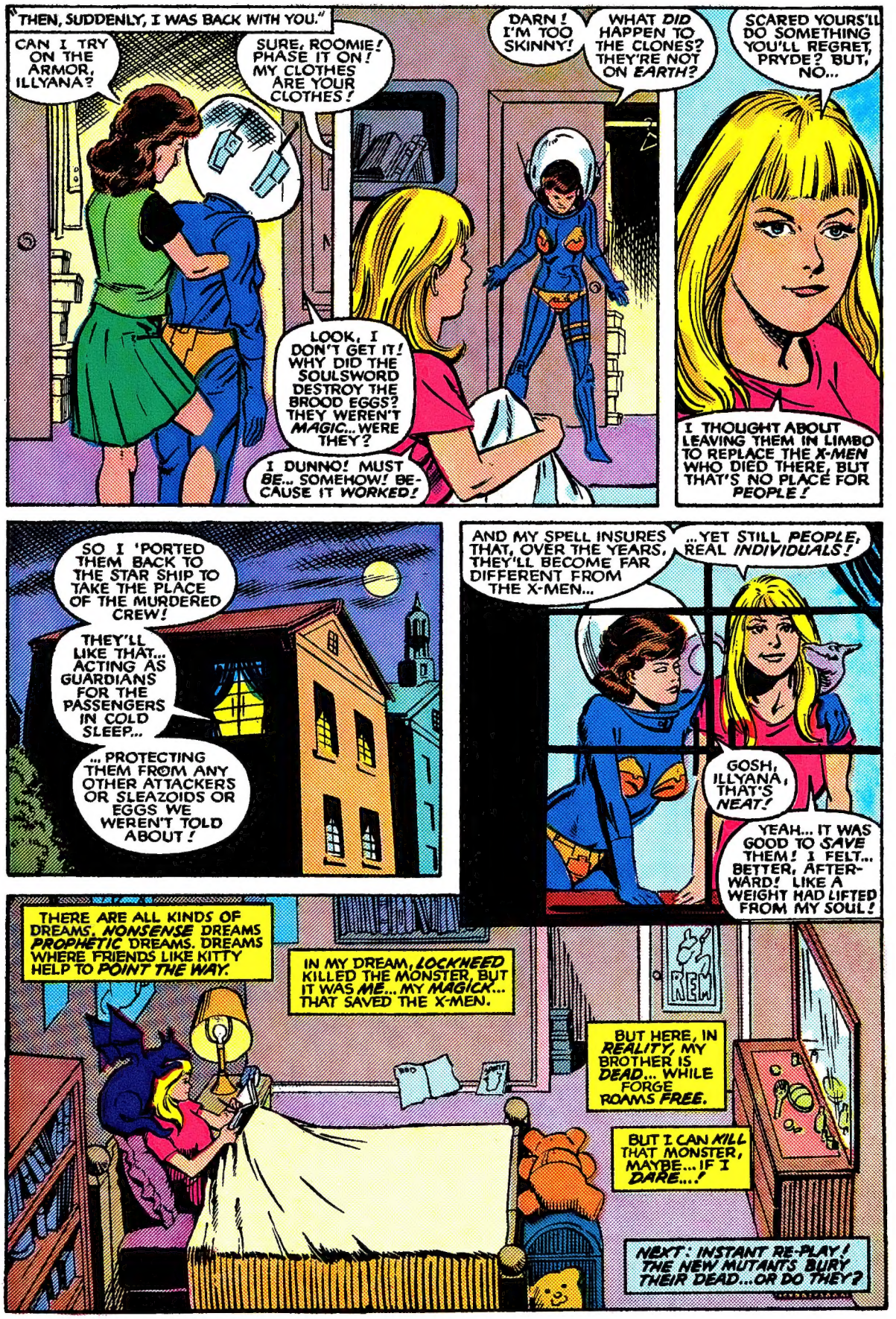

"IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, WE WERE IN *LIMBO*...
"...I, IN MY *SORCEROUS GARB*, THE *X-MEN* LINED UP BEFORE ME, LIT BY MY MAGIC... GLOWING LIKE STARS!
"EXCEPT FOR THE BLACK, SPLOTCHY GROWTHS RIGHT NEAR THEIR HEARTS-- THE *BROOD QUEEN'S* FOUL *EGGS!*
"MY *SOULSWORD* LEAPT INTO MY OUT-STRETCHED HAND!


"I SWUNG IT WITH ALL MY *MIGHT*...


"... AND THE DARKNESS FADED AND THERE WAS ONLY THE LIGHT."
YOU'RE *CURED*... THE EGGS HAVE BEEN *DESTROYED!*


WE... THANK YOU!
BUT WHAT DO WE DO NOW? WE SURE CAN'T GO TO *EARTH!*

JA! THE MEMORIES WE HAVE OF OUR LIVES THERE... THEY ARE FALSE. THEY DON'T *BELONG* TO US!


"THEN, SUDDENLY, I WAS BACK WITH YOU."
CAN I TRY ON THE ARMOR, ILLYANA?
SURE, ROOMIE! PHASE IT ON! MY CLOTHES ARE YOUR CLOTHES!
LOOK, I DON'T GET IT! WHY DID THE SOULSWORD DESTROY THE BROOD EGGS? THEY WEREN'T MAGIC... WERE THEY?
I DUNNO! MUST BE... SOMEHOW! BECAUSE IT WORKED!
DARN! I'M TOO SKINNY!
WHAT DID HAPPEN TO THE CLONES? THEY'RE NOT ON EARTH?
SCARED YOURS'LL DO SOMETHING YOU'LL REGRET, PRYDE? BUT, NO...
I THOUGHT ABOUT LEAVING THEM IN LIMBO TO REPLACE THE X-MEN WHO DIED THERE, BUT THAT'S NO PLACE FOR PEOPLE!
SO I 'PORTED THEM BACK TO THE STAR SHIP TO TAKE THE PLACE OF THE MURDERED CREW!
THEY'LL LIKE THAT... ACTING AS GUARDIANS FOR THE PASSENGERS IN COLD SLEEP...
...PROTECTING THEM FROM ANY OTHER ATTACKERS OR SLEAZOIDS OR EGGS WE WEREN'T TOLD ABOUT!
AND MY SPELL INSURES THAT, OVER THE YEARS, THEY'LL BECOME FAR DIFFERENT FROM THE X-MEN...
...YET STILL PEOPLE, REAL INDIVIDUALS!
GOSH, ILLYANA, THAT'S NEAT!
YEAH... IT WAS GOOD TO SAVE THEM! I FELT... BETTER, AFTERWARD! LIKE A WEIGHT HAD LIFTED FROM MY SOUL!
THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF DREAMS. NONSENSE DREAMS PROPHETIC DREAMS. DREAMS WHERE FRIENDS LIKE KITTY HELP TO POINT THE WAY.
IN MY DREAM, LOCKHEED KILLED THE MONSTER, BUT IT WAS ME... MY MAGICK... THAT SAVED THE X-MEN.
BUT HERE, IN REALITY, MY BROTHER IS DEAD... WHILE FORGE ROAMS FREE.
BUT I CAN KILL THAT MONSTER, MAYBE... IF I DARE...!
REM
NEXT: INSTANT RE-PLAY! THE NEW MUTANTS BURY THEIR DEAD...OR DO THEY?

Minutemen

Sy13nt Bob